







RUGBY FOOTBALL









# RUGBY FOOTBALL

BY

W. J. A. DAVIES

ROYAL CORPS NAVAL CONSTRUCTORS

ENGLISH INTERNATIONAL, 1913-1923

CAPTAIN OF THE ENGLAND XV, 1920-1923

CAPTAIN OF THE ROYAL NAVY XV, 1919-1923

WEBSTER'S PUBLICATIONS LTD.

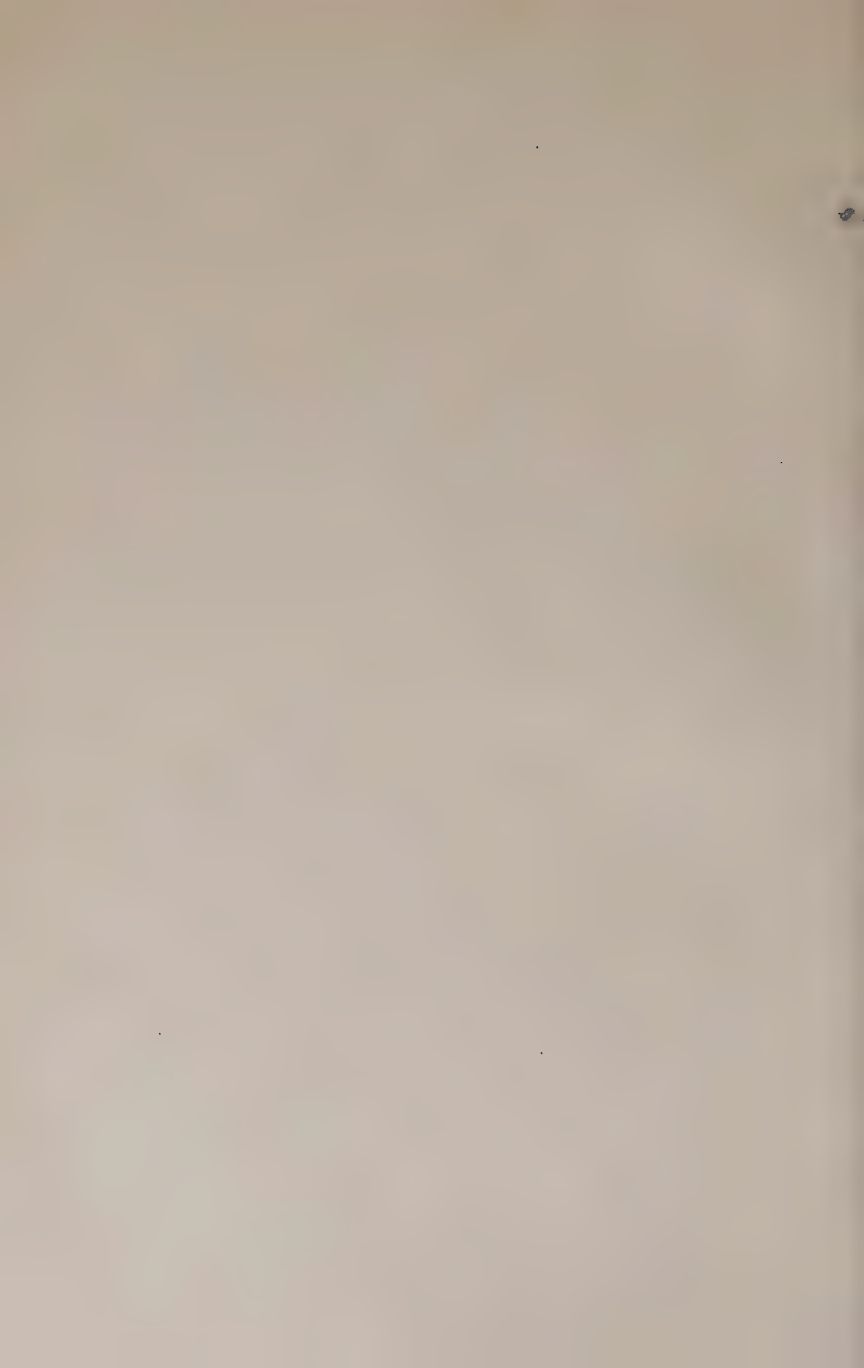
70 TEMPLE CHAMBERS

LONDON, E.C.4

*Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London*



To  
J. W. BAXTER,  
AND THE  
ENGLISH SELECTION COMMITTEE OF 1922-1923



# CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
PREFACE (by J. W. Baxter) . . . . .	II
I SPIRIT OF THE GAME . . . . .	19
II MEMORIES OF GREAT INTERNATIONAL MATCHES .	31
III NAVY'S PROUD RECORD . . . . .	43
IV CAPTAINCY . . . . .	59
V FORWARD PLAY . . . . .	69
VI SCRUM LEADERS . . . . .	99
VII HALF-BACK PLAY . . . . .	104
VIII THREE-QUARTER-BACK PLAY . . . . .	124
IX THE LAST LINE OF DEFENCE . . . . .	137
X TACKLING, PASSING, AND KICKING . . . . .	145
XI TACTICS, POSITION GOOD AND BAD . . . . .	161
XII TRAINING AND PRACTICE . . . . .	180
XIII POST- AND PRE-WAR RUGBY . . . . .	194
XIV WHAT OF THE FUTURE ? . . . . .	200
XV VITAL HISTORICAL FACTS . . . . .	214
XVI SELECTION COMMITTEE AND SECRETARY . . . . .	223
XVII THE GAME IN FRANCE . . . . .	229
XVIII THE LIGHTER SIDE . . . . .	237
AN APPRECIATION (by B. Bennison) . . . . .	243





## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	TO FACE PAGE
Portrait of the Author . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
An Introduction to His Majesty the King . . . . .	23
The late R. W. Poulton-Palmer . . . . .	67
L. G. Brown . . . . .	67
Correct way to hold the Ball . . . . .	99
A Short Punt and quick Follow-up . . . . .	115
Inter-half Passing . . . . .	121
A Place Kick before and after Impact . . . . .	157
J. W. Baxter . . . . .	225
C. J. B. Marriott . . . . .	225





## PREFACE

By JAMES BAXTER

*(Chairman of the English Selection Committee)*

IT was with very great pleasure that I agreed, at the invitation of the publishers, to write a brief preface to this volume. As an official of the Rugby Union, I have been in close association with its author for many seasons, and it is a duty as well as a privilege to convey to its readers something of the esteem in which England's late captain is held by all those connected with the government of Rugby football.

Let me state at once, then, my firm conviction that not only is W. J. A. Davies the greatest match-winner who ever put on a football boot, but that as captain of the national fifteen he was essentially the right man in the right place. Idolized by the men under him, trusted to the full by the Rugby Union and all its officers, his lovable personality and intense enthusiasm for the game marked him out as the ideal captain. It is well known that, under his leadership, England has never lost a match, and I think I may say without fear of contradiction that she never expected to lose one, so supreme was the confidence placed in his prowess and in his unfailing ability to rise to the occasion.

Now that his great career has come to a close, England and the Royal Navy, not forgetting the United

Services, will realize more acutely than ever before all that W. J. A. Davies has meant to the game. Whilst he was in his prime he did not suffer lack of appreciation, though, like most great players, he was at times attacked by the ignorant or prejudiced, but only those most intimately concerned realized to the full his extraordinary influence on every match in which he took part. Failure was to him almost an unknown quantity; again and again he pulled out of the fire matches apparently lost, and even when on the losing side he never ceased his efforts to stem the tide.

In victory and defeat alike he showed that he possessed the perfect Rugby temperament. He was never unduly exultant, and most certainly he was never depressed by failure; he took both with a cheery good temper which made him as popular with his opponents as with his own people. No player was ever more closely marked by the other side, and anybody who had the good fortune to tackle him invariably put him down good and hard. But nothing ever ruffled him; it was all in the game, and never once was he guilty of the vulgarity known as "getting his own back."

Another prominent trait of a delightful character was his invincible modesty. It is impossible even to imagine England's late captain indulging in anything of the nature of a boast. He was always keenly appreciative of the efforts of others, and even when, as captain of the side, he was invited by the selectors to give his opinions, he never condemned anybody. It was the good that he saw in all his comrades, and not the faults. For all that, he is a keen judge of the

game, and now that he is a selector himself, for he has succeeded Commander E. W. Roberts as sole selector of the Royal Navy side, his knowledge and intuition will stand him in good stead.

If I were asked to point to the secret of his success, I should recall the old definition of genius, "an infinite capacity for taking pains." For no player ever devoted more time and thought to practice than did W. J. A. Davies. He was constantly to be seen on the United Services' ground at Portsmouth, whether alone or in company with others, training hard, trying all manner of schemes and plans, dropping at goal from all sorts of angles, kicking from every position conceivable and inconceivable, and inspiring others with the same desire to make perfect by the same unremitting devotion to the game. Sometimes, when he has brought off a brilliant dropped goal from some apparently impossible angle or situation, the remark has been heard, "What a fluke!" Little did the critic know that Davies had tried that same shot scores of times before, and that his success was merely the logical and legitimate result of sustained effort.

Yet all this practice would never have raised him to his unique position in the game. Rugby, once a mere hurly-burly on Rugby Close, is now one of the most scientific of all games, and he who would make his mark upon it must have brains, and perhaps more than his fair share of them. Years ago the Rugby man was looked upon as the very type of the "brutal athlete," all brawn and muscle. Time has changed all that. The Rugby player of to-day must have plenty of sense and complete co-ordination of mind

and body. Brain, eye, hand or foot, must be completely in harmony with each other ; there is no time to consider, and in Rugby, above all games, it is true that he who hesitates is lost.

Can anyone remember ever seeing Davies hesitate ? Being only human, he may have done the wrong thing at times, though not often, but he never hesitated. All he did was done at express speed—his drop at goal, his cut through, his kick to touch, his passing, all happened so quickly that the opposing forces were often left standing in sheer bewilderment. Internationals of more than one country have for years expressed their opinion that they would never beat England as long as Davies played, and they spoke the truth. How many packs of forwards have been worn down by his long touch finding ? How many games have been won by his cleverness and resource ? Never could he have achieved his long roll of victories unless he had possessed a Rugby brain of the highest order.

Physically he was admirably adapted for his position on the field, for at stand-off half a man must be above everything active and quick off the mark. Standing just over five feet eight, and weighing at his best a few pounds more than eleven stone, he was strong enough to hold his own in a rough-and-tumble, and yet as nimble as the proverbial cat. His hands were simply perfect ; he cared not how or at what height the ball came to him from his partner as long as it came fast enough. He had a wonderful eye for an opening in the defence of the opposition, and, given half a chance, he was through to the full-back almost before his opponents had realized that he was on the

move. His amazing swerve gave him many of his best tries, and many a would-be tackler, who had made certain of his man, has been chagrined to find that he literally had not got within feet of him. Incidentally, it is worth noting that he was very much faster than he appeared to be.

But he was no mere individualist; he realized to the full the value of combination with the men behind him, and he tried his utmost to bring them into the picture. Of late years England, like other nations, has not been blessed with centres of outstanding ability, but Davies made the best use he could of them, and it was not his fault if the line did not obtain as many tries as perhaps it should have done.

Great captains are born, not made, and undoubtedly Davies possessed in high degree the faculty of getting the most out of the men under him. The force of his personality in this respect can hardly be overestimated. He was never beaten himself until the whistle had gone for the last time, and he would not let his men be beaten either. In his plans of campaign he never lost sight of the fact that the first aim of Rugby is to score points. He was always out to win, attack appealed to him much more than defence, and he would take any chance to snatch a victory when all but hope seemed lost.

A brief sketch of his wonderful career may be permitted. William John Abbott Davies was born in June, 1890, and began his Rugby as a scrum-half at Keyham College, which has produced such famous internationals as E. W. Roberts, S. F. Cooper, and J. C. Matters. Thence he went to the Royal Naval



College, Greenwich, and it was there, in 1910, that he first attracted the notice of the Navy authorities. By this time he was playing at stand-off half, and in the season of 1911 he gained his Navy cap for the first time. His partner was that very brilliant player, F. E. Oakeley, and up to the war they were not separated in the Navy side.

It was in 1913 that Davies was first chosen to represent his country, against W. E. Millar's South African team, and it is worth noting that he was then on the losing side for the first and only time when wearing the glorious white of England. A fortnight or so later he made amends by helping England to beat Wales at Cardiff, this being the only occasion on which England has been victorious in that city. It was Davies who threw out the long pass which enabled V. H. M. Coates to score the first try England had gained at Cardiff since 1893. From such an auspicious start as this Davies never looked back. Out of the twenty-two matches in which he wore the English rose, one was lost, against South Africa, as already mentioned, and one was drawn, against France in 1923. The other twenty were all won, and in every one of those victories Davies had no small share, whilst several of them were directly attributable to his prowess. On the retirement of J. E. Greenwood at the close of the 1920 season, he became captain of England, a position he held to the end of his career. Throughout this period, too, he was captain of the Royal Navy, and had much to do with their series of triumphs over the Army.

Since the war he had as his partner Lieut. C. A.

Kershaw, who had a considerable share in the success both of England and the Navy. Davies could have had no more admirable support, for Kershaw was a player after his own heart, and indeed owed more than a little to his careful coaching and to their constant practice together. As a pair they have not been rivalled, and individually each, in the opinion of one humble individual at least, is the greatest player in his position of Rugby history. The Kershaw-Davies period may some day be rivalled ; it can never be eclipsed.

It seems hard to realize that Davies will be seen no more leading England into the field. As a selector I feel that our task, never an easy one, will be rendered yet more difficult by the fact that successors to the famous Navy pair have to be found. Spectators, officials, players, all will miss the captain who has served them so well, and who embodied in his play all that is best of the spirit of Rugby. "A most parfait gentil knight" himself, by his splendid unselfishness and unswerving loyalty to the highest traditions of the game he has placed Rugby on so lofty a pinnacle that its devotees are prouder of it than ever before. The glorious band of brothers who fell in the war may well have looked down from above and felt happy in the knowledge that the game they loved was in safe hands as long as "Dave" was its guiding spirit. His active days are over, but he leaves behind him the memory of a very great player and a very gallant gentleman.

JAMES BAXTER



# RUGBY FOOTBALL

## CHAPTER I

### SPIRIT OF THE GAME

London Scottish Record—A Necessary Sacrifice—Essential Physical Qualities in the Player—It “sweats the vice out of you”—Calcutta Cup Thrills—Individuality *v.* Courage—Rugby Football a Sport, not a Business—Duty of Old Players and Club Managements.

THE playing of games is a social factor in the life of every generation ; the best games are gradually evolved and handed on. Games, as distinct from gymnastic exercises, develop the mind as well as the muscles, and as such are essential to the education of our race. Rugby football, above all others, is a mental gymnastic which keeps mind and spirit as fit as wind and limb. It is a strenuous and manly pursuit which commands devotion, and in exchange it creates a greater personality, greater power of sustained effort, and greater bodily fitness. No proof is needed from me of the popularity of Rugby football, not merely as a spectacle, but as a game ; and there is no doubt that it is gaining an ever-increasing hold on the British public—an attraction, judged not by the numbers who watch the games every Saturday afternoon, but by the large number of players. It

is a common achievement for one of the best-known Rugby football clubs to put four, five, and sometimes six, teams in the field on one afternoon. I allude to the London Scottish. Can anything equal the record of that great club, which on the last Saturday of the season 1914 placed four teams in the field, and forty-five of these men made the supreme sacrifice in the war? Surely on that last Saturday they were learning and showing some of those qualities which stood the Empire and civilization in good stead in the fateful five years that followed.

We must take a legitimate pride in the fact that the game of Rugby football sprang from our native soil, for was it not in 1823, on the school fields of Rugby, that one William Webb Ellis picked up the ball in his hands and ran with it, so creating the distinctive feature of the Rugby game?

Englishmen (or Britons) in the past prided themselves on their love of all games, and were proud enough to think that our unchallenged supremacy in most of them would remain for a very long time; but the educational progress, begun in our early youth, has had its effect, and there has been a rude awakening lately. With it there are signs at times that the spectators fear the fate of their team too much, and the prospective success of the foreign invader on the field of Rugby football. Nothing could be more fatal to the good of the game than this unnecessary anticipation of defeat. Even if we are defeated, what matters? Someone must win, and success is generally deserved. The game has never been in a more healthy condition than it is to-day.

What we have to make certain of is that the lessons of our defeat are wisely and clearly analysed, the good points sifted from the bad, and our game improved by the process of filtration. Naturally we hope our own side will win, but the spirit of Rugby football must be there—that is, that the better team may win. And unless all players are prepared to sacrifice everything for the spirit of the game, Rugby football is not worth playing.

What are the qualities which a player should possess to withstand the rigours of a game, which to the lay mind seems so strenuous? My fond mother, when she saw me play for the first and only time, exclaimed after the match: "Thank goodness, you're still alive." To play Rugby football, certain qualities are necessary, without which high degrees of efficiency cannot be attained. A player must be physically sound in wind and limb, and his muscles and joints capable of development. It is true he cannot be entirely moulded according to the standards which some of us would like to set. Boundaries in physical structure exist beyond which he cannot be extended; successful schemes of training and practice have to be based on these limits. A Rugby footballer knows that there is a physical limit beyond which he cannot pass, but all players should strive to reach that limit.

Hard knocks are taken and given, and to withstand these the resistance of the muscles and bodily frame must be keyed up to the necessary pitch. This calls for systematic and regular training. The thrill of catching a Rugby ball, running at full speed, and of tackling an opponent under way, or of being tackled



by an opponent, are joys which cannot be experienced in any other form of sport, and they, to my mind, place Rugby football above other games ; there, I hope and believe, it will always remain. I am not one of the critics who decry the sister game of Association football ; but having played both for a number of years, I can say with conviction that the greater thrills of the Rugby game place it in a different class from all other ball games for men. To play Rugby successfully, you must train assiduously and keep your body fit. Bodily fitness is a complementary function to mental fitness, and the combination of both produces a better man. As one well-known player quaintly remarked : " Rugby football sweats the vice out of you "—and there is an abundance of truth in this unusual dictum.

Recreation and preparation for games mark a natural turning from that which makes life possible to that which makes life worth while. I have run round the United Services ground at Portsmouth, at all hours of the day, in sunshine and rain, light and darkness, in order to keep fit. Others have done the same thing, and, apart altogether from the games on hand, all have acknowledged unreservedly the general benefit derived from it. Some people are so imbued with the spirit of work, that they have no time or inclination for outdoor exercise, but the well-balanced man combines the two ; he does not neglect his bread-and-butter nor his recreation.

To crown a week's hard work by playing football for your country is to gain the greatest satisfaction, and certainly nothing has given me greater joy than





AN INTRODUCTION TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING

to play for England against Scotland at Twickenham. The third Saturday in March comes round each year, with its indisputable superiority over all Saturdays in the well-filled calendar of Rugby football, for it is on that day the destiny of the Calcutta Cup is settled, and, more often than not, England *v.* Scotland turns out to be one of the most decisive games in the determination of the championship. To say that it appeals to the Rugby football-loving public more than any of the other internationals is a commonplace and quite unnecessary nowadays. The fascination it exercises appears to grow each succeeding year, if we may judge by the amount which is talked and written of it, and of the glorious uncertainty of its result. Coming late in the season, the weather is generally good, and, more often than not, we get an afternoon's sunshine. The scene is set—a very green piece of turf, which is looked after by the amiable secretary of the Rugby Union almost as zealously as the centre court at Wimbledon. Music by the Pipers helps to while away the hours of waiting. Crowds, who have no special desire to take their seats much before the match commences, walk up and down the parade at the back of the stands. Ten minutes before the scheduled time to kick off, all the spectators are seated, and the chief actors in the drama are lined up near the entrance to be introduced to His Majesty the King. The King arrives. The band plays the National Anthem, and every one stands and bares his head. The players are introduced. Three cheers are given for His Majesty, and never can cheers have been more heartily given. His Majesty likes to see any form of outdoor exercise;

but Rugby football in particular appeals to him, and he generally has on these occasions the good fortune—from a footballer's point of view—to see as finely contested a game as could be wished for. That the King should be interested is only natural, for all manly games (and Rugby football especially) are essential to the preservation of our race, and an extension of the competitions in friendly rivalry between the picked athletes of every country should go far to ensure the future peace of the world.

At the close the players leave the field to the accompaniment of cheers from their fellow-countrymen and to the shouts of "Well played, England." They don't get anything more. But what more do they deserve? The essential thing is, they have taken recreation. They have played the game for the game's sake. They have won, perhaps they have lost; but they leave the field conscious of the fact that they played the game in the right spirit. There may have been some token of individuality in their play, in which case the spectators will applaud their genius by shouting to them individually as they pass into the dressing-room.

Wodehouse, a well-known international and Services forward, and captain of the English team of 1913, told me that individuality always wins international matches. After six years' experience, I am inclined to agree with him—partly. Individuality certainly, but only in those who can subordinate it to the good of the side. A far greater asset for any side is courage. A team must show a good example of courage in Rugby football, as in other games, otherwise all will



be lost. Many games have been lost by captains and teams, who have not had the courage to take a probable risk in going all out for a win. There are times, even in the pursuance of that object, when strong defensive tactics must be employed before the final attack can be made ; but the courage to attack and keep on attacking is the keynote of success. There is a tendency nowadays, and certainly in international matches, where the issues are so important, for sides and captains to fear their fate overmuch. Tactics which will go all out for a win must be encouraged. At all games, and Rugby football in particular, hazards must and should be taken. To play for safety defeats the object for which Rugby football is in existence, and subordinates the spirit of the game. Play as dangerously as the circumstances admit. Take risks, and at the same time realize that risks must be taken in the spirit in which all games should be played.

We claim, and with very good reason, that sport is not the least thing in which Britons have set a good example to the world ; but we have believed in it all along purely for its own sake. At Rugby football, as distinct from most other games, the only prize is victory, and the best efforts of individuals are merged into the corporate effort of the team. Individual efforts count, and, as I have said before, sometimes dominate the issue ; but it is the team which wins, and not the individual, and one and all in victory, as in defeat, must be distinguished by the old traditional spirit of sportsmanship.

Rugby football is assuredly a game where the higher mental faculties are employed more than in any



other. Especially is this the case when the player has become an expert. A beginner at any game is confronted naturally with many difficulties, and his brain must concentrate on effecting complete unison between hands, feet, and eyes. To get them in unison requires concentration of mental power, but when once this is acquired, the process becomes mechanical. Some people possess this faculty in a more highly developed degree than others; they are said to possess the games brain, and their schooling days are soon over. To those not possessing this faculty, more concentration is needed before the process becomes mechanical. But after this stage has been reached, the higher mental faculties come into operation. Rugby football, more than any other game, has its surprises and its unforeseen problems. The player has to foresee many of the moves on the field and endeavour to anticipate them in advance. It is these which test the greatness of a player and differentiate between the sound and brilliant, for they call for original contrivance and a reserved exercise of the higher mental faculties. Many people imagine that an international Rugby footballer is the product of an accidental growth, possessing peculiar innate qualities. True, certain qualities are necessary, without which a player cannot hope to become international class; but these in varying degrees most men possess, and they are only developed by assiduous practice.

Rugby football to-day stands stronger than at any time since the game started. The attendance at Twickenham for an international match, combined with the facts that the seats are generally applied for

ten times over, is proof, if direct proof is needed, that the game is flourishing. In spite of all that has been said in some quarters since the war about the maturity of the English side, the decadence in Welsh Rugby, and similar lamentations, and in spite of many counter-attractions, Rugby football is exercising a more compelling influence than ever before in its history. Large crowds watch our games nowadays, and generally return home with thoroughly agreeable recollections, because Rugby football (thanks to the foresight of Rowland Hill and others) is, and will always remain, a sport and not a business. Sportsmanship, it is very sad to relate, is non-existent in many games to-day, due as a general rule in a large measure to the attitude of the crowds. This attitude soon reflects on the players, who are apt to take their cue from the spectators, and that cue generally is to win at all costs. The whole structure of games should be built up on the twin principles of fair play and unquestioning submission to the ruling of the referee. We can claim, I think, that Rugby football, judged both by the conduct of the player and of the spectator, is a healthy sport, and it behoves us all who are lovers of the game, and more especially the old internationals, who have received so much joy in competing in friendly rivalry with the picked athletes of other countries, to see that the game never ceases to attract. The international Rugby footballer's duty to his country is to share with others some of those qualities which have helped him onward on the field of play. There are plenty of players anxious to hear all about the finer points of the game, anxious to see you play, anxious

to play with or against you, and there is nothing more valuable to young beginners than direct contact with the noted players of the past.

Don't waste your time and energy in condemning other forms of sport. Remember that in every man lurks a Pharisee strain, pardonable enough it may be, but still a Pharisee strain, which dictates to him, and tells him that his game is the best game in the world. The best good you can do for the game of Rugby football is to play the game always in the spirit in which it should be played, and to inculcate this spirit into all with whom you come into contact.

Every international footballer should desire and endeavour to spread the spirit and finer points of the game; and it is incumbent on all old players to see that no player is debarred from learning at first hand.

The reasons for the boom in Rugby football since the war are not difficult to analyse, but to the clubs we owe a great deal for keeping up the fine traditions of the game. Club football is the backbone of international football, and is the bedrock on which the spirit of the game must be founded. The joys of Rugby football are known to many of us. To repeat myself, the thrill of running at full speed and catching a ball, being tackled "good and hearty" by an opponent, or, better still, tackling an opponent, no other game can produce, and until we inculcate the Rugby spirit into every schoolboy, the management of Rugby football has not only failed, but failed lamentably. It is fortunate that most clubs realize this, and are doing everything in their power to encourage Rugby football amongst the boys. In their great enthusiasm

for the game, and the natural exuberance of spirit which they are showing, they are lightening considerably the task of those in command of English Rugby football to-day. Do all clubs realize that the Poultons, Wodehouses, Kershaws, Lowes, were caught young and schooled in the correct ideas when they were at an age best fitted to receive them? The success of a Rugby football club is not measured merely by its wins and losses, not by the number of internationals it produces. Success is gauged mainly by the enthusiasm and numbers of its playing members and the spirit which these members show when playing the game. The spirit of Rugby football, as of all games—to strive to win, and, failing this, to concede the palm to the victors in the most gracious manner possible—should be the keynote of every club's policy. Clubs pursuing this policy will eventually produce better footballers and better fellows. One without the other is useless, and the ideals of every Rugby club should be to make every player a better footballer and every footballer a better man.

No club has done better work in inculcating the right ideas into the Public School boys than Rosslyn Park. They are doing everything in their power to encourage Rugby amongst the boys—and their policy can be well commended to all other first-class clubs. But there is one aspect of the Public School-boy games which, with great diffidence, I dwell upon—the undue publicity given to these matches in the public Press. I have been treated so kindly myself throughout my Rugby football career, that I hate to criticize Fleet Street too severely; but I do beseech them to report

matches without unnecessarily enlarging upon the good points of any of the individual players. Rare is the head on a Public School boy which can stand too much praise from the daily Press. Schoolboys are nowadays playing Rugby football and are the cynosures of the public eye at a very impressionable age. Anything seen in print by them is taken to heart seriously—so seriously, in fact, that it is not always for the good of the game they might one day adorn.

The process of dissemination and tutelage, so ably carried out by Rosslyn Park, must be extended, and all of us must remember that the qualities necessary for Rugby football are not the monopoly of any particular section of the community.



## CHAPTER II

### MEMORIES OF GREAT INTERNATIONAL MATCHES

An Unappreciated Talent—Selection Committee's Rebuke—My First International—Kershaw's Discovery—Captain of England—An Irish Story—His Majesty's Congratulations.

I WAS initiated into the mysteries of Rugby football at the great Rugby school of the West, the R.N.E. College, Keyham, joining at the age of nineteen. Unfortunately, it was the last entry of the old scheme of engineering cadets, and only twenty-one were training there. With these small numbers, it was impossible to raise a team commensurate with the merits and records of the past history of the college, and only a few matches were played against very inferior sides. I played scrum-half, and my only recollection of these early games was the thrill which they produced in me, and an ability to pass the ball between my legs to my partner, which received his recommendation, but raised acrimonious discussions in the mess on several occasions, as to its wisdom. I repeated this performance once in an international match against France in 1913, but was severely rebuked by the Selection Committee. It is interesting to note that the only other occasion I remember a similar pass being used in a big match was against Wales at Twickenham in 1923, when Corbett, hemmed in by



opponents, passed through his legs to Smallwood, who dropped a goal which gave England the victory.

The next season I played stand-off half for the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, and was picked to play at the end of the season for the Navy against the Army. About this, my first really important game, I remember very little, but I recollect Wodehouse, our captain, laying a bet with the Army captain, W. C. Wilson, at half-time, that the Navy would win, although we were then eight points down. The bet was not taken, but the Navy lost, and as far as my memory serves me, I did little to stave off defeat. In this game I first played with Oakley, and commenced a partnership which resulted in our playing for England in the last match of 1913, and against France, Scotland, and Ireland in 1914.

In my third year at Greenwich I gained my international cap. I was again fortunate in my chance. An urgent wire from Hodgson, the secretary of the London team, on the Friday before the match, asking me to play against the South Africans, put me on the threshold of international football. London beat the South Africans, and with Newport shared the honour of being the only teams to defeat the visitors. Moreover, London was the only English team to claim this record.

To my great surprise, the next week I was picked in the International Trial, and soon afterwards played against the South Africans in that memorable match when England sustained her only defeat at Twickenham by nine points to three—two penalty goals and a try to a try.

Certain impressions of my first international remain indelibly imprinted in my mind. A great feeling of uneasiness crept over me on entering the dressing-room, as I was a comparative stranger to all the players, and the importance of the occasion rather overawed me. Of the game itself, I remember certain things very clearly. My disappointment when Wodehouse failed to kick a goal from under the posts, after Poulton had scored a try, was immense.

Then I remember clearly Poulton's wonderful run, almost through the South African team, in his own most inimitable way—probably the most thrilling and dazzling run in the history of the game. I shall never forget the speedy Stegman coming up at a tremendous pace to overhaul him, and then finally two wonderful kicks at goal from the touch-line near half-way by Gerald Morkel for petty infringements in the English scrummage. These were events which have never been equalled for pure thrill in an international match since, except perhaps the first quarter of an hour of the England and Wales match in 1921.

The following match in 1913 was against Wales in Cardiff. I was greatly impressed with the strong confidence of Wodehouse, our captain, in his belief that we were going to give Wales a good hiding, and his keen disappointment at breakfast on the morning of the match, when it was raining. Of the game itself, I remember little, excepting Poulton's dropped goal—a marvellous effort, in a quagmire—and a certain satisfaction I had in getting across to tackle their wing three-quarter on several occasions—no great feat, as the speed of the Welsh outsides was well below

the average. Wales were defeated for the first time in eighteen years—on a ground which favoured them, a veritable sea of mud, at Cardiff Arms Park. It was a very satisfied English team which travelled back to Paddington that evening.

The other international games during the 1913 season impressed me very little.

The season of 1914 opened very inauspiciously for me. For the England *v.* Wales match, Oakley and I were dropped and preference given to Wood and Taylor, the Leicester halves. It was not altogether unexpected, as I was playing very badly at the time, but it was a grievous disappointment to me that I was the cause of Oakley's departure. However, Wood and Taylor did not survive, and we were again picked for the Irish and the remaining matches.

My first visit to France was at the end of the season, when England won by 39—13, although the French team had made a terrific commencement. After the match, one of the Selection Committee commended Oakley and myself on our game, and stated that their only mistake during the season was dropping us for the Welsh match. I cannot subscribe to this statement. At the beginning of the season I was playing very indifferently, and thoroughly deserved my enforced departure from the team; but it was a cause for satisfaction that we made good again.

After the Armistice in 1918, playing in a trial match for H.M.S. *Queen Elizabeth* against one of the squadrons in the fleet at Rosyth, I met Kershaw. We played together for the Grand Fleet against the Rest of the Navy in March, 1919, and commenced a

partnership which lasted until the end of the season 1923.

Our esteemed friend, the *Morning Post* correspondent, was at the match, and was duly impressed with Kershaw, who first came into prominence from that day. Fortunately for both of us, we were appointed to Portsmouth, where we were stationed for several years, and had ample time and opportunity to develop that intimate friendship and understanding necessary for a successful partnership.

It is only right that this small autobiographical note, which the publishers have deemed necessary for a proper understanding and appraisal of this book, should include a token of appreciation of my partner during four years of international and club warfare. Kershaw I can write about with the most unbounded admiration. He, more than any other player, revolutionized scrummage half-back play, and contributed in no small measure, by his great initiative and daring, to the success of the English side, during the four years following the war. Endowed with all the physical advantages necessary to the attainment of the highest class, and possessed of natural ability for all ball games, his was the premier place in the list of scrummage half-backs. This present-day writers freely assigned to him, and historians will, I feel sure, follow suit. International Rugby footballers can usually and most conveniently be classed into the sound and the brilliant. Kershaw was assuredly of the latter. He was the born, not the made footballer, or, as some writers would prefer to put it, because he was a born Rugby footballer, he made himself one. The sound are made



by constant labour and practice, and they betray the soundness of their labour by their orthodox methods.

It was not so with Kershaw. No critic could justly say that Kershaw was orthodox. Many good Rugby footballers do certain things well because they spend most of their practice-time in doing them. Kershaw practised little, due to the fact that Rugby football was only one of the many games at which he excelled, and he could rarely find the time to practise assiduously, and yet he was amazingly accurate in both the larger and the smaller movements. His Rugby football did not suffer by the diversity of his interests. Having more than one talent, he used them sparingly, and by the freshness he brought into play, he increased his power. The game of Rugby football, however, lost a mentor who, by his undisputed, pre-eminent position in the Rugby world could have done much in schooling the young idea into the correct ways.

Unfortunately at the beginning of the 1919-20 season, I cracked a small bone in my leg, which prevented me from playing until the trial match, England *v.* The South. After England *v.* The Rest, I was dropped for the match against Wales, in favour of Coverdale. I was disappointed, but not surprised, as I was very slow. I travelled to Swansea as a reserve, and saw the game from the touch-line. It was a very unsatisfactory exhibition, and created no great impression on my mind. Coverdale, who was playing in my place, failed to find his form, and I was reinstated into the team for the French match. We just managed to beat France and Ireland, and finished up the season in convincing style by beating Scotland, who had

previously beaten Wales. The result was that England, Scotland, and Wales were bracketed equal at the head of the championships, a fitting result to the aftermath of war.

I was asked by Mr. James Baxter, the president of the England Selection Committee, to captain the team the following season, a post I was entrusted with for three years. Mine was an easy task, and I should like to place on record now my deep appreciation of the loyalty of every player. If the case is narrowed down to its essential facts, I think the success of the English team during these three years was due to the happy feeling which existed among the players—a feeling made possible by the spirit instilled into us and the example set by the Selection Committee.

In 1920–21 England won the championship in decisive fashion, and we finally finished up our international season by defeating France in Paris. The success of the English team in this season brought forth the usual comments on its comparative strength with teams of the past, and I have often been asked my opinion as to the comparative playing strength of the team compared with the 1914 team. An answer, which is accurate and without qualification, is hard to find, but in a subsequent chapter I have tried to analyse the situation, after careful filtration of the facts. If the personal element could be eliminated and Rugby football theories treated dogmatically and logically, then perhaps one might conclude that the 1914 team was the better, as the general standard of play, due to the ravages of five years of war, was inferior in 1920 to 1914.



It was a great disappointment to me that, owing to a deep-seated strain in my leg, I was unable to play against Wales at Cardiff the following season. In my absence the team was captained by L. G. Brown. No better person could have led the English team, and it was the irony of fate that, owing to a combination of unfortunate circumstances, the team played very badly. No finer character than L. G. Brown (Bruno) ever stepped on or off a Rugby field. He was the essence of what a Rugby footballer should be—cool, calm, and collected.

Our win against Ireland in Dublin in the following month did much to restore the prestige of English Rugby, after the *débâcle* in the mud at Cardiff. I shall never forget the indescribable enthusiasm of the crowd when Ireland scored their only try in the first ten minutes of the game, nor the remark of an Irish supporter in the stand to the Irish team during a lull near the end of the game, when Ireland were well beaten: "If you can't catch Davies, for heaven's sake ruffle his hair." The remark was taken to heart by the Irish players, for in the corresponding match at Leicester, in the following season, I was brilliantly tackled and my hair purposely dishevelled by G. V. Stephenson, the Irish centre three-quarter.

England were decidedly fortunate to draw with France at Twickenham, and we owed everything to the wonderful place-kicking of Day. Day's performance was all the more remarkable, as it was done with a pair of boots borrowed from Pitman (reserve), his own having been mislaid during the journey from the hotel to the ground.

A well-deserved victory over Scotland at Twickenham put England second in the championship, and again restored the country's confidence in the team, which had been shaken by the ignominiously lucky draw with France.

In 1923, England again won the championship, defeating in turn each of the other countries. Wales were beaten at Twickenham after one of the most sensational starts ever seen at a Rugby football match. England kicked off against a small gale blowing straight down the ground. The ball was blown into the hands of H. L. Price, who was following up. He endeavoured to drop a goal. The ball fell short on to the goal-line. Price caught it on the bounce and fell over the line for a try before the unhappy Welsh team realized the game had commenced. It was a sensational opening to an otherwise inglorious match.

Smallwood dropped a goal in the second half from a lucky pass by Corbett, and England won by 7 points to 3. No reputations were enhanced that day, and the quality of the Rugby was never of a very high order.

At Leicester, against Ireland, we played better, and ran out easy winners.

It was realized that the English team would be severely tested against Scotland. Scotland playing at Inverleith had better reason for hope, and yet even in Scotland there were some misgivings. To defeat the Welsh team in Wales, who had previously only just lost at Twickenham, suggested superiority; to defeat Ireland in Dublin in decisive fashion was no bad omen. Moreover, we had to take the field with a

centre three-quarter and full-back new to international football. How would Locke and Holliday acquit themselves on the wind-swept turf of Inverleith? The game itself, played in the presence of the Duke of York and his future wife, was a series of thrilling changes of fortune. England scored first through Smallwood, but Scotland soon equalized. Neither try was converted. Half-time came with honours even. The scoring powers outside of either team was not impressive, due to the relentless tackling of the opposition. When Scotland scored their second try, and for ten minutes afterwards, it appeared that England's fate was sealed, but it was not to be. The end of the second half justified those who always contended that the maturity and experience of the English side would prove successful in the end. Locke, the new centre three-quarter, broke away and passed to the ever-ready Voyce, who hurled himself over the line for a try. Luddington's kick at goal was successful, and the Calcutta Cup was retained for another year. Even the most extravagant patriot of Scotland could not say that England did not deserve her victory, and the play of the English team, and the Scottish team as well, bore out the high expectations which had been formed of both of them. England's effort in the last quarter of an hour when three points down, and the Scottish team playing strongly, was as brilliant as it was brave, and showed a true appreciation of the spirit of Rugby football.

It now appeared probable that England would be undisputed champions for the season, but the game in France was no easy obstacle. Played in delightful

weather, before the largest crowd ever assembled to watch a Rugby football match in that country, England proved successful by 12 points to 5. It was unfortunate for England that Lowe and Smallwood were both crocked in the first ten minutes of the game—a handicap which tested our defence severely and reduced the effectiveness of our scoring powers considerably. As on other occasions earlier in the season, England owed her victory mainly to the skill of the forwards, who scored both our tries.

The game was a fitting climax to a successful season's work, and the English team's display was much appreciated by our friends in France, and the French team, who have yet to register their first win against us.

With the figures in front of us, we can safely say that in 1923, as in 1921, the English team was as good as, perhaps a little better than, any of the other countries could show. But more important still was the proof that Rugby football is exercising a more compelling attraction than ever before, not as a spectacle, but as a game, and what better game for the morale and physique of the nation could be played?

On my return from France, I received the following letter from Colonel Clive Wigram, conveying the congratulations of His Majesty the King to the English team :

WINDSOR CASTLE,  
*April 3, 1923.*

MY DEAR DAVIES,—

The King wishes me to let you know how delighted he was to hear of the victory of the English

team in Paris, and to congratulate you on being captain of the winning team in all your matches.

His Majesty feels sure that you must have created a record by this fitting termination to your brilliant career in international football.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) CLIVE WIGRAM.

Constr. Lieut. Commander W. J. A. Davies, O.B.E.,  
H.M. Dockyard, Portsmouth.

With the game in France I severed my connection with international football. Probably it was a year overdue, as during the last season I feared the fate of my team too much, and was unprepared to play as dangerously as the circumstances permitted—a sign of age. Looking back over one's international career, one has few regrets, but realizes how greatly one is favoured by circumstances.



## CHAPTER III

### NAVY'S PROUD RECORD

Formation of Naval Rugby Union—Encouraging the Lower Deck  
—A Thrilling Game—Admiral Royds' Breezy Advice—  
Commander E. W. Roberts.

**I** HOPE I shall be forgiven by my readers for daring to include a chapter devoted entirely to Navy Rugby football, but the connection between Service and international football, and the influence of the former on the latter, has been so great, that I am sure I shall be excused any bold effrontery which may be supposed to exist on my part in dealing with it.

It is unnecessary, to support my case, to say that since 1907, when E. W. Roberts captained the English side against Scotland, three other Navy players have been selected to hold that responsible position, while in 1908 Surgeon-Lieutenant Louis Greig captained Scotland. Moreover, in the season 1923, five Navy players played for England against Wales and Ireland, and it was only an injury to Gilbert, the Navy full-back in the annual match against the Army, which precluded this record being maintained for the whole season.

Several Navy players have also played for Ireland and Scotland, so we can justly claim, without any vestige of arrogance, that Navy Rugger has exercised

a certain influence over the destiny of Rugby football, and English Rugby football in particular—an influence which has considerably increased since the war.

Up to the year 1906, naval players, in order to get first-class games, and to stand a chance of obtaining higher honours, were compelled to play for civilian clubs, such as Blackheath, Richmond, London Scottish, Harlequins, Devonport Albion, etc., except in the case of those going through their training at the Royal Naval Engineering College, Keyham. As the engineering cadets numbered 200 odd and remained at the college until they were twenty-two years of age, it was possible to get together several representative college teams, and the best of these was able to hold its own with any first-class club in the country.

About 1903, a definite movement was made to induce all officers in the Navy to give up playing for civilian clubs and to support the United Services club at Portsmouth, but this was not a complete success until the Naval Rugby Union was formed in 1906.

Formation of this union came about through the late Admiral Spencer Logan calling together at the United Services Club, Pall Mall, London, Lieutenant (now Captain) Percy Noble, Lieutenant (now Captain) D. F. Moir, Surgeon-Lieut. Levick, and Engineer-Lieut. (now Engineer-Commander) E. W. Roberts.

At this meeting it was decided to form a union, and to appeal to all old and present Rugby players to support this union and all Service clubs in preference to civilian ones.

The idea was splendidly received throughout the Service, and from that moment the future of naval Rugby was assured.

The organization and control of Navy football are under the direct authority of the Committee of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Rugby Union, to whom certain powers have been delegated by the Rugby Union Committee, and every officer and man are *ipso facto* members of the union. The powers are only delegated to recognized governing bodies when all individuals and clubs involved are under the jurisdiction of one governing body, and when delegating the above powers, the Rugby Union Committee wish it to be clearly understood that the governing bodies have not the power or the right to further delegate any of these powers. Another important point which deserves special attention is that recognized governing bodies have no power to sanction the formation of leagues.

In the year 1876, the first Navy *v.* Army match was instituted and played at the Oval, and, after being in abeyance for many years, was revived at Queen's Club in 1907, on which ground it was continued to be played until 1914, when in 1920 the venue of the match was transferred to Twickenham. Since 1920 the Navy have also played representative matches against the Royal Air Force. Of the twelve matches which have been played against the Army since the revival of the fixtures in 1907, the Navy have won ten, the two wins for the Army taking place in 1911 and 1914.

It is an interesting fact that H. C. Harrison, the

Marine, has played both for the Navy and Army, and holds the unique record of never having played on the losing side. Harrison played for the Army on each occasion when they won, and contributed in no small measure to their success.

Since the war, officers and men of the Royal Marines are at all times only eligible to play for the Navy, so Harrison's record is not likely to be broken. It was unfortunate for H.C., as he was known by his more intimate friends, that a serious injury, playing against Cardiff, prevented him from realizing one of the ambitions of his Rugby career—to lead a victorious Navy side against the Army at Twickenham. His injury, which prevented him from taking further part in the game, occurred just three weeks before the annual encounter, and although he was unable to play, he had the satisfaction of seeing the Navy, who were only second favourites on the day, inflict one of the heaviest defeats on the Army side since the war, by the substantial margin of 23 points to 11, a victory made possible by the enthusiasm and guidance of H.C.

No one—E. W. Roberts, of course, excepted—has done more for Navy Rugby during his football career, or more to start Service Rugger going at Portsmouth after the war. It was the irony of fate that the accident against Cardiff should cut short his playing career and prevent him not only from captaining the Navy side, but also from obtaining a post-war cap, as he was picked to play against Ireland for England the day after being injured. To be picked for England in 1909, and also eleven years later, in

1920, is no mean achievement, and a record of which anyone can claim to be justly proud.

The Service match before the war was confined to officers of the respective Services, but since 1920 the annual fixture has been opened up to all ranks. This decision had a very far-reaching effect on Service football, and at the latter end of the season 1920, Leading Stoker T. Woods, who played so well against the Army, was picked for England against Scotland. Private E. R. Gardner, R.M.L.I., was picked for England the following season, and, with one exception, has been selected ever since. Luddington and Gilbert are other naval players who have gained international caps with distinction. International players of such repute coming from amongst the petty officers and men of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines exercise a real and sympathetic control over Navy football, and must do a lot to encourage all ranks to play Rugby.

The knowledge of Rugby football has of late years so greatly increased amongst the petty officers and men of the Fleet, that men of international standard are invaluable in encouraging the game and in arranging matches for combined teams of officers and men, and assisting in the management of these teams. To allow the men to take a far greater interest in the control of Naval Rugby, Chief Shipwright F. Gilbert was elected to a place on the Naval Rugby Union Committee in 1922, an innovation which will give the lower deck a more intimate acquaintanceship generally with the management of the union.

It is also interesting to note that the present president of the R.N. and R.M. Rugby Union is Rear-



Admiral P. M. R. Royds, C.M.G., who played for England in 1898 and 1899.

One point worthy of note is the consistent form shown by the Navy players in their international career. Wodehouse, who captained England in 1913, first played for England in 1911, and was picked for all the international matches in 1911, '12 and '13. Kershaw played for England for four consecutive matches without a break, and although his playing days are not yet over, it is feared that the exigencies of the Service may prevent him from playing further international football. Gardner is another typical example who, except on one or two occasions, has played for England consecutively for three years. There is no doubt that Service life is conducive to fitness, and officers have a unique opportunity—at Dartmouth, and in their subsequent training—to become efficient players; but I have serious doubts, after eight years' intimate connection with Service football, whether the younger generation make sufficient use of the opportunities which come their way. Navy Rugger in the past has been placed and kept at a very high level more by the enthusiasm and skill of a few members than by that of the masses.

The high standard now set up, based on such insecure foundations, will not stand the test of time, and will eventually fail, and it behoves everybody in the Navy, and the young officers in particular, to see to it that the splendid traditions of Naval sport, which in no branch has been so worthily upheld as in Rugger, should continue to hold the same high place as it has done in the past, which can best be obtained by more

whole-hearted enthusiasm. It can only be accomplished by much self-sacrifice on the individual's part—sacrifice which must be made to compensate for the serious break in the Rugby footballer's career which occurs when at sea.

Navy Rugger must be retained at a high level. It is essential for the esprit and morale of the Service and of the country, and no personal sacrifice should be too much to ensure that it is so.

The decision that all ranks should be eligible to play in the annual match against the Army and Air Force has done much to keep the prestige of naval Rugger at its present high level, and has cemented in a very great measure the ties which exist between officer and man in the Navy—ties which can only be strengthened firmly on the field of sport, and especially at Rugby football.

Since the war, the Navy has carried out tours in the South of France, and at a committee meeting held in 1922, it was agreed that Admiralty sanction should be asked for the tour to become an annual fixture, a proposal which was readily agreed to by their Lordships. Not only have the tours been of inestimable value to French Rugby football, but the Navy team have benefited considerably by their experience. They were received everywhere with whole-hearted enthusiasm—a tribute to the fine quality and skill which the players showed in all their matches. In every case, whether the Navy won or lost, the best was always put up by the team, and the French public were loud in their praises of our skill.

The tours are very popular, and an extract from a

letter from one of the men, in reply to a message of sympathy from me on breaking his collar-bone, soon after returning from France, shows, if any proof were needed, the men's delight in taking part in these annual tours :—

R.N. HOSPITAL, DEVONPORT.

DEAR SIR,—

Thank you for your very kind letter and your good wishes for a quick recovery. I was very pleased it didn't happen before the French tour. I wouldn't have missed that delightful tour for anything. I may say that I shall never forget the kindness and the wonderful feeling that existed between officer and man. We were all like one family, and I shall never tire of telling of the wonderful time I had with you all. I was also very glad you came down West to let our half-backs see how Mr. Kershaw and yourself can play Rugger, and everybody was delighted with you both. But nobody appreciates you more than the forwards, who play in front of you—what a treat it is. Again thanking you for all your kindness and well wishes, and good luck to you in the next Rugger season is the wish of,

Yours obediently,

S. KEALEY.

It is only natural that the date most eagerly anticipated in the calendar of Navy Rugby football is the first Saturday in March, when the annual match

against the Army is played. Though the quality of the Rugby may not always reach a very high standard, it is generally first-class; the spirit in which the game is played and the whole-hearted enthusiasm of the players—and the spectators—are well in keeping with the traditions of both Services. I remember a very enthusiastic Navy supporter eulogizing the prowess of the Navy to a keen Army Rugby footballer, stating that he could produce fifteen players from the Navy on the first Saturday in March who would hold their own with the Army team, even if they hadn't kicked a Rugby football before that season.

The keenness between the two Services is so great, and the Twickenham environment on a Navy *v.* Army match day grasps one's imagination so completely, that the Navy team always seems to rise to sufficient heights to win.

The most thrilling Navy *v.* Army match in which I have ever taken part was in 1921, when the Navy won by 11 points to 10 in the last minute of the game. Unfortunately, the game clashed with the Scotland *v.* Ireland match in Dublin, which took Thompson, Halloran, and Mackenzie away from the team. To make matters worse, Kershaw was in bed with influenza. Four internationals away, including the scrum-half, the leader of the forwards, and both centres, was a bad omen for the success of the side, although it is only fair to state Charles Usher was unable to play for the Army.

The game opened sensationally. After a few minutes' play, the Army forwards heeled the ball, and after a round of passing, King, the Army wing three-quarter,

eluded his opposite number and Evan Thomas, our full-back, to score a try. This annoyed me intensely, because special instructions had been issued before the match to watch King (who was then at the top of his form) very carefully.

My annoyance developed into a lecture on general invective when King repeated the performance in exactly the same way about ten minutes later. Our grief was shared by the School for Naval Officers' Daughters from Twickenham, who were sitting in the corner of the stand near where the tries were scored, shouting "Navy," "Navy," as the Army were taking the place-kicks, which, luckily for us, were unsuccessful. The flood-gates of discomfiture were opened upon us later when King dropped a goal. Ten points down, and all scored by the one person whom the Navy players were particularly told to mark. Yes, it appeared as if someone had blundered.

There was a council of war at half-time, and, as on all such occasions, advice was freely offered. Every one was full of palliatives and remedial measures, but none more than H. W. V. Stephenson, our right wing three-quarter. His agony at the thought of the Navy being beaten by the Army in his first match was too amusing for words. It was fortunate that Stephenson was on the opposite wing to King, otherwise the Army might have finished with fourteen men. I am sure the remainder of our side were animated with the same spirit as Stephenson, but mature age kept it within bounds. I was just as much concerned as he, but ten points down, considering the run of the game, appeared no insuperable task.



Never have I seen a Navy team, or any other team, rise to the occasion as the Navy did in the second half. Passes which had been dropped in the first half were held. The ball was heeled cleanly from the scrum, touch was found with accuracy, and it was apparent, to even the casual observer, that the Army forwards were quickly tiring. A good round of passing saw us score a try, which we failed to convert. Stephenson scored the try. Soon afterwards we were awarded a penalty kick wide out in their "25." I was just preparing to attempt to drop a penalty goal when a voice from an enthusiastic supporter, who evidently realized my capabilities as a drop-kicker, shouted, "Take a place, Davies." The advice was taken, and a successful place-kick was the reward.

Four points down, and still a quarter of an hour to go, was more hopeful. Our tails were well up, but the Army were putting up a stout resistance. The enthusiastic Navy supporters were mad with excitement. It was difficult to hear oneself speak on the field, and Agnew, the leader of our forwards, had no voice left after the game. It looked as if the Army would win after all. We could not get through by orthodox passing. There was still five minutes to go, when we decided to kick and follow up. This policy succeeded. After three unsuccessful attempts which yielded little result, a further punt was tried, which the Army full-back fumbled near their goal-line. The chance was accepted, and Eyres, our centre three-quarter, picked it up and touched down over the line. The excitement, of course, was now intense, and, luckily for us, the kick, taken in a death-like silence,

was successful. Only a few minutes remained for play, and the Navy retired eventual winners by one point, after one of the most exciting games in which I have ever taken part.

The game was won by nothing more than kick and rush—rush, controlled by brain, and the very effective use of kicking. I mention this because of a letter I received from Admiral Royds, the old English international, which I read to the players before the game. It is so interesting that I need make no apology for quoting it in full. As the game turned out, it was, generally, a true forecast of the afternoon's play, and I can commend its perusal to all future Navy captains for this annual fixture. Of course, every captain will go on to the field prepared to adopt some plan, but he should always be prepared to shift his plan of campaign at the opportune moment if the occasion demands it.

21 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W.1.

23.2.21.

DEAR DAVIES,—

I am sorry I shall not be present for the Navy and Army match this year, but the R.U. has asked me to referee the Wales and France match at Cardiff, and, much against my wish, I have agreed to oblige them, feeling it is all for the good of the Navy Union, though I wish the games had not clashed.

I am afraid our side have been robbed of several good players through international games and accidents. It is unfortunate, but one must be

glad that one's leading players have received recognition. It is up to the reserves who have taken their places to adequately fill them, and it is a golden opportunity for them to distinguish themselves—so many good players suffering through not getting such an opening.

If I were you, I would get my team together sometime in the dressing-room and impress on them that every jack one must go all out, putting every ounce of ginger they possess into the game. I am afraid I feel our forwards lack ginger and are too much like old sheep. They must go on to the ground well roused.

The Army are all out to wipe off a past defeat. The game will *not* be a soft one, and our chaps must be impressed with the necessity of not taking their bumps lying down.

I am afraid most of the attacking force behind will have dropped out. Well, we have relied on you for attack several times, and you won't let us down; but it must be remembered that the three-quarters are just as likely to drop the ball as catch it, which might bring about serious results.

Explain to them that it is up to them to make up for it in defence, and every Army man *must* be brought down. This is also an occasion where more kicking of a judicious nature would pay in the gaining of ground; but touch must be found. Naval three-quarters always ought to kick more, and not always run.

Last year every one rose above their usual form,

tails were sticking up at right angles, and I do hope same will be followed this year.

Bustle and something exhilarating at the commencement will make all the difference—good luck and every success.

I only wish I was going to be one of the many shouters. Stir the chaps up to action!

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) PERCY ROYDS.

Any chapter on Navy Rugby football would be incomplete without reference to Engineer-Commander E. W. Roberts, R.N., the old international. By his intimate services to Navy Rugby, given directly and ungrudgingly throughout his career, in no showy but an extremely useful manner, he has done more than any other person to raise and keep Navy Rugby football at its present high-water mark. After his playing days were over, E. W., in committee and management, continued the good work previously commenced on the field, and showed a thoroughness and love of detail not usually associated with players of repute.

Commander Roberts received his initiation into the mysteries of Rugby football at the R.N.E. College, Keyham, where among his contemporaries were J. C. Matters and S. F. Cooper. He first played for England against Wales in 1901, and in 1906 played for England against the All Blacks at the Crystal Palace, and in 1907 captained England against Scotland.

Soon after the close of his active career, he accepted the honorary secretaryship of the Royal Navy Rugby Union, and since 1911, with an occasional break or

two, he has acted as sole selector of the Royal Navy team. Only twice, once against the Army and once against the Air Force, has his team met with defeat.

To the younger generation as the Navy team selector, and during the last few years as a member of the English Selection Committee, he will be better known than as a player. He was helped, some enthusiasts will aver, by having plenty of talent available, but only those who were brought into intimate contact with him know his sound reasoning and logical conclusions, his innate gift for picking out a player long before that player attained international class, and his peculiar gift in times of emergency in filling vacancies, and only they can testify to his wonderful capacity as a team selector. If success in his new capacity is measured by wins, the full measure of it was his lot.

A very striking example of the gift of divining the right player in cases of emergency occurred in the Navy *v.* Army match of 1922, when, owing to an injury to Gilbert, the full-back, no one appeared as a suitable candidate. By a stroke of genius, Reg. P. O. Kealey was selected to fill the position. Never has a full-back played better, and never more truly can it be said that the Navy owed their victory that day to one man—the full-back. Middleton, the Army full-back, was in great form, kicking an extraordinary length, and only failing to find touch on two occasions. Kealey, not kicking such a prodigious length perhaps, never failed to find touch, and only made one semblance of a mistake—a mistake which is always forgiven in a full-back—the pardonable sin of failing to



field a very high kick almost out of reach, instead of waiting for the bounce.

Yes, the Navy owed a lot to Engineer-Commander Roberts that day in selecting Kealey, and to Kealey for his extraordinarily fine display when everything was against him.

Before concluding this chapter on Navy Rugby football, I should like to refer here to our defeat by the Air Force in February, 1923, and to congratulate the Air Force on behalf of the Navy team on their first victory against us when the odds appeared against them. It was a great effort and the beginning of a new era in Air Force football. I am not a pessimist, even if the worst is realized and we lose again next year—that will not mean a loss of Navy sporting prestige. The standard of Navy Rugger is as high as it has ever been. Naturally, we hope to win always, but the spirit of Rugby football is that the best team must win, whether it is the Navy, Army, or Air Force, and I think we can claim that it is in this spirit that all the Service games have been and will be played.

## CHAPTER IV<sup>1</sup>

### CAPTAINCY

The Two Essential Qualities—Claims of Positions In and Outside the Scrum—Discipline and Plans of Campaign—How to apportion Praise and Blame—The Ideal Captain.

**I**T generally happens that one player, either by his brilliance on the field or by the force of his personality—perhaps both—commends himself to the remainder of the side as the indisputable captain for the season. Rarely are both qualities found in one person. As is more often the case, one or the other is lacking. It is generally agreed that the second is the more important characteristic, and should be the determining factor.

Certain players who by precept and example set a high standard of efficiency in their play often fail through not possessing the necessary force of character, or sense, in leading men on the field. It is difficult to define personality or force of character as applied to a captain of a Rugby team. Perhaps it can best be described as that power which tells a player when to do a certain thing one way rather than another, combined with the power to instil the correct spirit individually and collectively into the remainder of the side.

<sup>1</sup> Certain passages in this chapter are reproduced by kind permission of the Editor of *Wisden's Rugby Football Almanack*.

After several years' experience of international Rugby, having served under three different captains, two forwards and one centre three-quarter, and having captained the English team myself for three years, I think, with all due deference to the forwards, that the best position from which to captain a team is outside the scrum, and in particular from the stand-off half or centre three-quarter position.

A captain with his head buried in the scrum goes on to the field at a disadvantage. He is unable to realize, without an appreciable lag, any change of tactics by the opposite team, and cannot see the game in its clear perspective. I have heard the argument advanced, that a player captaining a team outside cannot know what is going on in the scrum. Certain of the finer or more detailed points of forward play might escape one's notice outside, but these cannot influence the general strategy of the game, and any corrective effect is best left to the leader of the forwards. Moreover, the scrum, if properly led, requires the undivided attention of the leader of the pack, who, immersed in the detail of forward play, cannot find the time adequately to control the strategy and tactics of the game. Captaining a side and leading forwards are best carried out by separate individuals, and their duties should not be combined by one and the same player.

Players like John Daniell, E. W. Roberts, Wodehouse, Greenwood, etc., captained the English team very successfully from the scrum, as successfully, perhaps, as it has ever been captained, but I maintain that the innate gifts for leading a side which

they undoubtedly possessed would have found more abundant scope outside the scrum.

Of the positions outside, it is very difficult to compare the respective claims of the stand-off half and the centre three-quarter position.

Some critics consider that the stand-off half, the pivotal member of the side, who by his play generally controls the tactics and strategy of the game—the duty of the captain is to supervise—is the natural player to captain the team. Others consider he is much too preoccupied in the general phases of the game to be burdened with the captaincy, and is unable to visualize the game quickly and clearly. This is the logical conclusion of the arguments put forward above, and I agree with it, although during my three years' captaincy of the English and Navy teams I found very little interference between the conflicting claims of dictating policy and playing the game.

It must not be inferred that a captain's duty finishes when the team leaves the field. A captain exercises as great an influence off as on the field. The esprit de corps and the morale of the XV must be kept at a high level, and it is the captain's duty to see that this is done. The average Rugby player, like the average man, is governed more by sentiment and habit than by pure reason. A captain's aim should therefore be to cultivate the right sentiments and spirit towards the game, and to spread the stimulus of his own desire to do creditably and to win, if not, to be cheerful losers, among the remainder of his team.

Interest in the team should not be confined to the

eighty minutes' play on the field, but should extend as far as possible, without any undue interference with the management committees, to all the organizations and social functions connected with the matches. In an international side, where the several members are often unknown to one another, it is the captain's duty to see that no one's interest is neglected. A happy team is a successful one.

Discipline is necessary in a team if the best is to be achieved. Efficiency, comfort, and love of one's play depend solely upon discipline. Many players imagine that humiliation and loss of self-respect is involved if a captain tries to enforce discipline in a peremptory manner. Example, on and off the field, set by the captain, will be imitated. Discipline follows, and never is it more necessary than in the heat of an athletic contest.

On the field the captain settles his plan of campaign at the commencement, but every good captain will be fully alive to the importance of a change, if the situation demands it. A good captain will adjust his plan to the changing circumstances, instead of expecting that circumstances will fit the plan. He will endeavour to find out the strategy of the opposition and their weaknesses, and to lay his plans accordingly. An intimate knowledge of the several members of your side is also necessary if the most is to be got out of them. Analyse the weakness and strength of individuals. Play up to their strength, and induce them to overcome their weaknesses.

A captain should decide before the game the changes to make in cases of injury to the out-



sides. Although at first sight it appears an easy problem, it is one which requires careful consideration. A policy of expediency can be adopted and a winging forward brought out of the scrum. In nine cases out of ten this may be right, not because he is the best outside, but generally because his absence from the scrum is less felt than any other player.

I remember committing quite a grave mistake in a trial match at Bristol on one occasion. Luckily, we had established a comfortable lead, so the folly of my error had no serious consequences. I brought Wakefield from the scrum to play centre three-quarter, moving Myers to stand-off half, after I was crocked. Wakefield, probably the fastest player on the field, with a safe pair of hands, appeared to be the best centre three-quarter. The effect of taking away a player so big entirely disorganized the pack and upset the scrummage for the last ten minutes.

Wakefield committed a similar error himself when captaining the Air Force against the Army in 1922. The Air Force had established, as was their custom, a strong superiority forward, but were not dependable outside. In the second half Wakefield came out, with disastrous results. The Air Force were leading at half-time ; the Army won.

Although the majority of positions are filled as well as can be expected in an emergency, easily, this is not true of the scrum-half. Generally, a totally different type of forward from the winging type is required as a scrum-half.

I was fortunate to captain an English team with players who could fill several positions outside. Myers

could deputize as stand-off half, Smallwood, and Lowe in an emergency, at centre, without any loss of efficiency to the team. A deputy for Kershaw was hard to find. Luckily, we never wanted one. Cumberlege, and afterwards Conway, were the most suitable. It needs a great deal of thought to select the best man with the least dislocation in the working of the team as a whole. Do not shirk it. It is a difficult problem which must be faced eventually. The morale of your side is strengthened if the changes take place smoothly and without the usual soviet gathering which sometimes occurs on these occasions. Always remember to let the vice-captain know your intentions in these cases of emergency. In the Irish match in 1921, at Twickenham, I was crocked with concussion in the first five minutes, and was unable to take any further part in the match. Unfortunately, I had omitted to tell L. G. Brown my proposed plans. I had discussed them casually with him, so everything was soon in order; but even old Bruno fell into the trap of expediency, so easy in the heat of the fray, of taking Wakefield out of the scrum. No harm was done, but the English team did not settle down until well into the second half, and we won comfortably in the end by 15 points to nil.

Another point, small perhaps, but nevertheless important, which a captain should remember, is to tell off, before the game commences, the players to take the place-kicks, long and short distances, and free kicks—to either touch—not necessarily the same person. Much valuable time is gained if this is done beforehand.

A captain, with the assistance of the leader of the forwards, must stamp out any vestige of unfairness with a firm hand, and should strive to inculcate the spirit of Rugby football into his team—to strive to win and to be cheerful losers. By this supreme test will the captain be judged.

A good captain will show judgment and the ability to sum up a situation carefully, to let the leader of the forwards know when to keep the ball, and wheel, or heel, quickly. He will endeavour to conserve the energy of his side in the best possible manner.

Courage is required in a marked degree from a captain. He should strive to go all out for a win, and to take sufficient risks to ensure this. Many captains fear their fate overmuch, and are rarely bold enough; but the spirit of Rugby football is to play as daringly as the circumstances admit, and every captain should endeavour to stimulate his team to take risks, instead of playing for safety.

The captain must not tolerate any talking or “back-chat” with an opponent. Remember that nothing aggravates an angry opponent more than silence, when he pours forth a torrent of invective at you. Players, and forwards in particular, are apt to question the ruling of the referee when his decisions displease them. This is contrary to the spirit of Rugby football, and, if persisted in, will undermine the chief support on which the existence of the game depends, and it behoves the captain to put this down with a firm hand. Three players only are allowed to talk—the captain, leader of the forwards, and the scrum-half. Unnecessary conversation by the remainder

of the team leads to indiscipline, and a dissipation of energy which can least be afforded.

It is the captain's job to diagnose the strength and weakness, and to endeavour to find out the tactics, of the opposition. His defensive plan should be arranged accordingly and attacks made at their weakest link. Initiative must be shown on the field, especially in dealing with a change of tactics by the opposition, or in meeting a sudden emergency. A good captain will possess zeal and energy. Zealous will he be to get the most out of his players—to see that everybody is as fit as he should be on the day of the match.

Many captains' reputations have been made—others marred—by their ability to apportion praise and blame to the remainder of the side. Praise is acceptable in any language. A defaulter must be dealt with tactfully. Nobody could make you feel a sinner with the expenditure of such few words as H. C. Harrison, the Services' captain of 1914 and 1920. A wealth of meaning was invariably carried with them. Words chosen without meticulous care, a tribute to our discipline and a recognition of our captain's authority, which hours of ordinary speech could not convey. Moreover, they were generally administered with a persuasive gentleness which only served to intensify their meaning. And yet I believe the average Services' player and captain is inclined to pay too much importance to the possibilities of language on the field. It is a custom, partly hereditary and partly due to one's environment, which is gradually decreasing. There are vast possibilities of carrying it to excess, and the







L. G. BROWN



THE LATE R. W. POULTON-PALMER

average spectator is apt to misinterpret the meaning of those who practise it.

H. C. Harrison was the best club captain with whom I have served. He, more than any other player, brought Services' Rugby back to the pre-eminent position it held before the war, and yet H.C. was not an unqualified success as a captain or leader of the forwards in representative games. Players from the West and other parts of the country misinterpreted his Services' manner in handling men. And yet, where could one meet a more charming personality or one who has done so much for the good of Rugby football? It was the bitter irony of fate that, when picked for England against Ireland in the third international of the season, in 1920, an injury should prevent him from accepting and incidentally taking any further part in international or club Rugby. A great personality in every sense of the word was "Dreadnought" Harrison.

The best captain, who played forward, I have played with in international matches, was Wodehouse. He always had a very thorough grip of the situation, which always impressed me.

Poulton was my ideal captain. No one of the present generation stands out more against the background of Rugby football than Ronald Poulton. One could not help liking him. His easy grace and charm of manner, his versatility on the football field, the characteristic run with the head well back and ball held in outstretched hands, are vivid impressions of probably the greatest figure which ever played Rugby football.

As I have said before, my task in captaining the English team for three years was an easy one, due in

great measure to the strong and unswerving support of every player, and the guidance of the Selection Committee. It was the best three years of my Rugby football playing days, and my only regret during that period was that an unfortunate injury prevented me from sharing with the remainder of the team, as assuredly I would have done, the defeat at Cardiff in January, 1922. My grief was mitigated somewhat by the fact that my absence gave L. G. Brown his chance of captaining the side, and enabled him to realize one of his ambitions. A charming letter received before the game was characteristic of the man :—

LONDON HOSPITAL,  
WHITECHAPEL ROAD, E.I.

DEAR DAVE,—

I heard yesterday that through your misfortune and inability to play, I'm to captain the side on Saturday. I'm more than sorry that this should be so, and should gladly have foregone the honour to have had you in your place in the team. We'll not play the same together without you. I wonder whether you'll make the trip to Cardiff. I hope so, for we'd all like to have you amongst us just the same. You must give your old leg a good rest, and no doubt you'll manage to be fit for the rest of the internationals.

Hoping to see you, then, on Saturday, and once more my regrets at your misfortune,

I am,

Yours ever,

“BRUNO.”

During my captaincy I was indeed fortunate to have L. G. Brown and Wakefield as leader of the forwards.

## CHAPTER V

### FORWARD PLAY

"Worst Forward in Europe"—Secret of Successful Scrummage Work—Systems of Packing—Method of Hooking—A Wheeling Error—The Art of Dribbling—Line-outs—Voyce, Pillman, and H. L. Price.

IT is almost rank heresy for a stand-off half to attempt to write about the principles of forward play, and I have been sorely tempted to ask a forward to give his views on the details of this part of the game. But the novelty of writing about something I have never done, except for a quarter of an hour once, in a game when, at the expiration of that period, the leader of the forwards was heard to say, "Well, Dave, you might be captain of the English Rugby team, but you're the worst forward in Europe," appeals to me tremendously. I left the scrum ignominiously, and took up my accustomed position of stand-off half, where I could be more useful. That quarter of an hour will remain indelibly impressed upon my memory. I was lost, and felt like a piece of cork buffeted about on the ocean waves. I was foolish enough once to get middle man of the front rank. My neck and back muscles have hardly yet recovered from the shock, and I shoved in constant fear that my neck would break. The remainder of my time was employed in hanging

on to the fringes of the scrum, and the small idea I got of a wing forward's duty was not a very impressive one.

I mention the lost feeling because I remember talking to two of the United Services forwards who played for England against the North in 1921, and asked them their impressions of their first international trial. Both stated they were completely lost. They didn't know where to go or what to do. At a hurried consultation at half-time, they decided to follow Gardner, one of the other members of the pack, and an old international, wherever he went. The policy was successful, and their game improved considerably. Gardner was a good example to follow. He was always, or nearly always, centre man of the front rank, and generally one of the first to break away from the scrum.

The foundations of good Rugby football are laid in the scrum, and a successful scrum depends entirely on the ability of the forwards to shove and pack. The forward who has mastered thoroughly, theoretically as well as practically—both are necessary—the art of knowing how to scrummage, has learnt by far the most essential feature of forward play. The knack of getting your head well down in the scrum and being able to push, and keep on pushing, and still keep on pushing, is an acquired habit, and acquired only after much practice.

If ever I was asked to coach a Rugby team of boys who were learning the elementary principles of the game, I should be very tempted in all trial games to make the scrum maintain its formation and keep on



shoving until the outside movement had been completed or stopped. Therein lies the secret of successful forward play, both individually and collectively, and therein also, I believe, lies the weakness of French Rugby.

Our friends across the Channel have neglected the elementary foundations of scrummage work, and paid too particular attention to the finer points of the game, and to them I can well recommend the method for beginners I have mentioned above. Keep your head in the scrum, keep on shoving, and still keep on shoving. It is a forward's main job on the football field. Don't neglect it.

The actual formation of the scrum is generally carried out in one of two ways. Packing 3-2-3 or 3-3-2. Many have been the arguments on the relative merits of the two systems. Such notable exponents of the forward game as Victor Cartwright and E. W. Roberts, probably two of the finest forwards who ever played Rugby football, both captains of England, were diametrically opposite in their views on this all-important question. It would be invidious for me, a mere outside, to attempt to give a casting vote in this controversy. Nay, it would be better for the good of Rugby football that the younger generation should argue it out amongst themselves, so that no points, trifling as they may seem, should escape attention.

All I propose to do here is to recapitulate, as far as I am able, the advantages and disadvantages of both, and let the future Cartwrights and Robertses fight it out between them. No logical conclusion is easily

drawn, and that is the only conclusion which I can give you.

I have often been asked, "How does England pack?" Since the war, England has packed 3-2-3, under three consecutive leaders, Greenwood, Brown, and Wakefield, also, I may add, three of the finest exponents of the forward game and leaders of modern forwards one could choose at random. I don't remember during their time any attempt to change this method of packing. I have been told that the aftermath of war left Rugby in such a chaotic condition that it would pay us better to adopt a symmetrical arrangement of 3-2-3, which needs little practice, than to commence with the 3-3-2 arrangement, which requires a greater degree of skill and more practice. Four years of Rugby football have passed with few changes in the English pack, and yet there has been no attempt to adopt, as far as I know, the 3-3-2 formation. To the lay mind it might appear that the time is now ripe for a change, if the 3-3-2 is the better arrangement. My readers must not infer that I am an advocate of the 3-2-3. I possess such a mere smattering of practical forward play that I dare not encroach on a purely forward question to this extent. Criticism on this point, to be good, must be effective. To be an effective critic, inside practical knowledge is necessary, and I have not got it, so I will simply endeavour to state actual facts and stick to them.

The 3-2-3 method, being a symmetrical arrangement, makes the scrum more compact and solid, and the centre and line of effort is along the line

of advance. There is less push in this method, as the outside shoulders of the outside men in the back rank are not shoving.

In the 3-3-2 formation, the only shoulder which is not effective in pushing is one of the outside shoulders in the second rank. In the diagram below, the shoulders *not* pushing in both formations are marked with an asterisk (\*).

Line of Advance.



Line of Advance.



The unevenness of the second arrangement is clearly seen from the diagram, and this unevenness is accentuated by the fact that not only is the right shoulder of the right-hand man of the second rank not pushing, but the right-hand man of the rear rank tends by the direction of his push to shove the wing second-rank man away from the scrum, so that the real effective push is provided by—



From these small diagrams and explanation, I think we may safely assume that there is more push in the direction the scrum wants and ought to go with the 3-2-3 than with the 3-3-2, although there is one less shoulder to push with. An advantage

which the 3-3-2 method of packing can claim over the 3-2-3 is that wheeling is greatly facilitated. Many forwards state that the most glorious part of their game is the execution of a perfect wheel. It might be. I cannot subscribe to this, but I can subscribe unreservedly to the fact that the most difficult thing for a half to stop or even check is a well-executed wheel by the forwards. I will go further than this and say, that a wheel properly executed and carried out cannot be checked by outsides, and can be only partly checked by the opposing forwards.

When forming a scrum, the first forward to get into place should stand with both arms up, so that the other two forwards forming the front rank may come in on each side of him, and not both on the same side, as one often sees, which helps to destroy the cohesion of the front rank. The centre man of the front rank gets down and binds with his arms either below or above the arms of his flank man. If the centre man's arms are *below*, he is then, if anything, behind and below his wing men, which gives him a better chance of seeing the ball and twisting his body. If he is above and in front, he is more likely to get an arched back, and, possibly, his neck screwed off. Sometimes, for comfort in the scrum depending upon the relative build of the three front-rank men, it will be better for the hooker to be arms above. Comfort in a scrum is an important factor. I have often heard an international pack grumble because the scrum was uncomfortable. A change was made. A more comfortable scrum was formed, and better results obtained.

The second essential point for the three front men is to bind tightly, and the two wing men must grip the centre man firmly, and the centre man must grip the wing men firmly. The front rank must keep their heads low, and if possible get their heads under the chests of the players opposite. Sometimes it will not be possible to do this, as in getting too low, the effectiveness of the push is lost. Although the front-rank men must bind tightly, it is essential that they leave sufficient room between their sterns for the second rank to take their allotted places in the scrum. If by any chance the front-rank men do not keep their sterns apart, the second-rank men must pull them apart, to allow their heads to fit in comfortably. The success of the scrum depends on the tightness of the second rank. The second rank shove with their shoulders upon the buttocks of the front rank, i.e. just under the cheeks of the front row's sterns. The two men of the second rank have their left and right arms respectively round each other, and the other right and left arms round the front-rank man. Do not bind below the hips of the front-rank men, as it prevents them from using their legs properly.

If a scrum falls to pieces, it is generally due to one of two causes—(a) the second rank are not binding tightly enough, (b) the second rank are pushing through the first rank, due to the first rank not binding tightly enough. Generally speaking, the two strongest (physically) forwards should form the second rank; that is, they should have sufficient physical strength to hold the scrum together.

The three men in the last rank push under the cheeks



of the second-row sterns. The centre man of the rear rank binds tightly to the second-rank forwards, and not to the wing men of his own rank. The two wing men bind the centre man with their right and left arms respectively. If the centre man binds round the wing men, the latter would be unable to get away. Care must be taken by the centre man not to bind round the legs of the second rank, but above the sterns. In any case, never hold on to another forward's legs.

In the 3-3-2 formation, the wing man of the second rank binds himself to the man next to him, but he must not be bound by him, and should push with one shoulder on the stern of the front-rank man. The two men in the last rank bind each other, and with their outside arms bind the fellows in front. In this case, it is important that the player binding the wing man should at any moment allow the wing man to get away from the scrum when and where he wants to go.

The general direction of the push should be towards the centre men of the front rank of the pack. The outside men of the back row shove slightly inwards, as shown in the diagram. By this method, the chances of the shoulder slipping up are reduced, and with the projecting sterns as shown, it is more difficult for the opposing scrum half to get round the scrum for spoiling.

Pack low. The legs should be bent at the knees, back horizontal, and the push from the ground given by the sides of the feet. Remember that the one unforgivable sin in a forward is not pushing in the scrum. In fact, divested of all its accessories, and

reduced to its simplest proportions, a forward's main job is to shove.

If a scrum is packed correctly, the player can see the ball in any position in his own scrum, and in any position of his opponent's scrum. Always keep your eye on the ball in the scrum, as only by this means can you really tell what to do and when to break away. For the hooker to be able to use either foot, he must be properly balanced. Proper balance can only be obtained if every one is shoving to the right place, and the scrum is comfortable. To change the feet for hooking is then simple.

The next point to consider is the method of hooking the ball. The centre man of the front rank hooks the ball generally. He can be assisted in certain ways. Take the case of the ball being put in, say, on the right-hand side of the scrum. The centre man of the front rank sweeps his left foot towards it and traps it back through the scrum. He can be aided in this movement by the outside man on the right, who is not allowed to lift his foot until the ball has passed him. In this case, it is trapped between the right foot of the wing man on the right and the left foot of the centre man, and sent to the back of the scrum. This is generally considered the safest and best method of getting the ball. The flank man on the side farthest away from the scrum half can also be of great assistance in steering the ball back if it comes crooked off the leg of the hooker. He swings his leg at the same moment as the hooker.

Whether the wing men are best employed in swinging their legs, or whether they are not better employed

shoving and keeping their legs well out, leaving a clear passage for the ball, is a very debatable point. Three men waving their legs means considerably less shove in the scrum, which is undesirable.

The single hooker is certainly practised in Wales. The speed at which the ball is put in by the half-back precludes the possibility of the wing man being of much use, also the excessive speed gives it the necessary momentum to come out quickly after it has been touched by the leg. Perfect timing and a thorough understanding between the scrum-half and the hooker are necessary in this case.

When a ball is heeled properly, it should not be touched by either the second or third rank in its backward passage through the scrum, but should pass through the centre, care being taken by the second and third ranks not to impede its progress. If it is not going straight out, it is the duty of the second-rank men to help it on its way. On very wet days, or when the ball has not been properly heeled, it will be necessary for the second or rear rank to do this. Second, and rear rank especially, must remember, however, not to heel too hard. Nothing aggravates a half more than to have the ball kicked out of the scrum by the third rank. If it is too late to heel, the second and third ranks must determine whether to keep it in the scrum and shove through with it, or wheel. Slovenly heels can often be turned into effective wheels.

We now come to the all-important question of wheeling. A wheel, as I have said before, is carried out when the ball has hung up in the scrum for some

reason or other. The ball should rest between the first and second ranks for preference, or, as sometimes occurs, between the second and third ranks, and the wheel should be executed in the direction in which it is tending to go ; if to the left, the left-hand second-rank man should control the ball. If the centre man of the front rank feels that the scrum is tending to wheel to the left, he pushes the man on his right with his right arm, pulls back the man on his left with his left arm, and at the same time places his right foot slightly more forward, and left foot backward, and so becomes the pivot about which the whole scrum turns ; the players on the right-hand side of the scrum push hard, while the players on the left-hand side walk back. When the scrum has turned a little more than a quarter of a revolution, the front rank still continue the turning movement, but the second and third ranks get their heads up and slide away to the right of the scrum with the ball, and carry on as in a dribble.

It is very often advisable, if the ball is in the second rank when the wheel commences, to transfer it immediately to the third rank. The subsequent dribble is facilitated if this can be done. The usual fault in wheeling is the failure of the second rank to get their heads up clear of the sterns of the front rank quickly enough. Remember, in wheeling, no member should come away singly with the ball. All the second and third-rank forwards should be with him. Five men in close formation gradually spreading themselves out, dribbling a ball, is a difficult proposition to counter. A wheel should be done quickly, or it will rarely be

successful ; the second rank must let the ball back immediately they feel the scrum beginning to turn.

The next point to consider is, having executed a wheel, what is the best method to stop it. E. W. Roberts considered that a wheel properly executed was almost irresistible. He thought that if it were slovenly, it might be nipped in the bud by the quickness of the opposing pack foreseeing what was about to happen. The opposing rear rank first, and then the second rank, come round quickly to form another scrum with the two last ranks of the wheeling pack, just as they are sliding off for the wheel. There is certainly no other method of stopping it. Halves or any other outsiders are powerless.

An alternative method which has been tried with success by the opposing pack is to shove in the direction of the ball in the wheeling scrum. The direction of shove must be realized immediately the wheel has commenced, if it is to have any chance of ultimate success.

Every forward should acquire the art of dribbling a Rugby football. May I quote from some notes given to the Navy forwards by E. W. Roberts :

The proper Rugby dribble can only be learnt after great practice. It should never be necessary, after once having started the ball, to touch it again with the foot, for it can be made to bounce over and over again on its points, hitting the shins of the player each time. It will be found, when dribbling a Rugby ball properly, that the faster you are able to run, the easier it will be to dribble. There is always a tendency for the ball during the dribble to rise higher and higher. Do not try to gather it when it is about the height of the knees, but wait for it to rise to the height of the hips, then gather and run on. If it ever comes to your lot thoroughly to master the Rugby dribble, and, having passed all opponents by



dribbling, to gather your ball as explained above, and sail in with a try, it will probably be one of the proudest days of your life. However, remember, that to attain this state of perfection much practice is necessary, but I can assure you it is well worth it.

Yes, dribbling is a fascinating subject and hobby. Although a stand-off half, who never or rarely played in any other position, I was never tired of practising a dribble; in fact, I might say I have practised it assiduously. I have never attained the perfection mentioned by Commander Roberts, of being able to dribble the ball end-on with my shins. I have no doubt it can be done. I found the easier method was to dribble with the inside of my feet—that is, both feet splayed—making every endeavour to keep the ball between them. Splaying one's feet is not a natural method of running, and to get up speed in this way requires constant practice. There is no doubt, as Commander Roberts points out, that the ball sooner or later rolls end-on, and then can be controlled by the shins with far greater accuracy probably than any other part of the foot. Eventually it rises hip-high, when it should be caught in the hands, not before. Avoid the inclination to gather it off the ground. Commence your training by going slow enough to keep the ball close. Speed will come, but it is essential that the ball should be under perfect control.

There is no greater nightmare to a stand-off half, or any other outside, than to see forwards dribbling in close formation with the ball less than a yard away from them. Three or more forwards constitute a successful dribble, spreading themselves on each side

of the person in possession at the commencement, and the remainder of the pack following behind to carry on the movement if the front men overrun the ball.

If the ball is overrun during the dribble, it is the players' first duty to run round and get on-side. This is often forgotten. If you can't get on-side, get away to one side quickly, so as not to be off-side, should the ball accidentally touch you.

The importance of having good dribblers in the side cannot be overestimated. I have seen no finer example of close dribbling than that shown by the Scottish pack against England at Inverleith in 1923. The ball was never more than a yard away from any one forward, and there were always four or more forwards in the movement.

I remember Wodehouse, the English captain in 1913, telling me that the forward who could dribble a Rugby football correctly for the length of the field, going all out, stood a good chance of getting an international cap. There is one other point in dribbling which I have not mentioned, and that is the Association pass, or combined dribbling of the pack, generally in one line across the field, when the ball is gently tapped from one player to another.

When dribbling near your opponents' goal-line, always avoid the temptation to pick up to score a try. How many tries have been lost by forwards, and outsides as well, endeavouring to pick up the ball when dribbling! A most difficult procedure, indeed. Far better to kick it a little way ahead of you over the line, provided no fast member of the opposition is hanging about, and then fall on it,

which is comparatively simple compared with picking up.

The next important phase of a forward's game is the work in the line-outs, and I should like to mention here that during my three years' captaincy of the English side and four years of the Navy side, nothing has exasperated me so much, at times, as the work, or slackness is the better word, at the line-outs. I do not suppose players I have had to captain were worse than any others—probably they were infinitely better—but I do know that many forwards, internationals too, either wilfully neglect their work, or fail to realize their job, at the line-outs.

The golden rule to remember at the line-outs, when it is a throw for the opposition, is: "Every man a man."

This elementary principle, which is the bed-rock of good work in the line-outs, must be so instilled into the memory as almost to become a sixth sense.

If your half is throwing in, and can be relied upon to throw the ball accurately—no easy matter—endeavour to stand in an open gap—a difficult procedure—even against the weakest teams. For safety, and speaking as a captain of several teams, my advice to all forwards is to get opposite an opponent, whoever is throwing the ball in. I have seen so many successful movements started at the line-outs from pure slackness in not marking properly, that I am sure the rule, "Every man a man," should apply universally.

The first instinct of a forward who receives the ball at the line-out is to drop it and commence a dribble.

The finest exponent of getting away from the line-out in a dribble was Wodehouse. Wakefield is the best of the present-day players, ranking not far behind Wodehouse. Probably, as more often happens, a dribble cannot be started. Then the other forwards should gather round the player in possession and shove hard. If the forward catching the ball can in the loose scrum so formed put it down and heel, so much the better; but it is more likely that the ball cannot be put down, when the player in possession should be shoved bodily forward by the remainder of his pack. The third alternative is to catch the ball as high up as possible and throw it to the open side of the field of play, preferably to the stand-off half, as he is the best person to initiate an attack.

Catching the ball and passing back is one continuous motion. J. E. Greenwood excelled in this. Numerous attacks were started by him in this way. Possessed of exceptional height, with a rare knack of catching the ball well above his head, it was a comparatively easy matter for him to swing round to pass to his outsides.

Always pass from above the head. A forward must remember that there is no time to catch the ball above the head, bring it down to the hips, and then pass. The success of the movement depends on the speed and suddenness with which it is carried out. Remember also that the pass back must be certain to go into friendly hands. It must not be a wild one. A slow pass back is fatal. It is very annoying to the stand-off half or other outside receiving the ball to find its time of arrival coincident

with two of the heavy opposition forwards. Never knock back. This, of course, is fatal. No sense of direction is assured, and the flight of the ball is uncertain. Luckily it is often given a knock-on. In this connection it is well to remember that a mark can be made from a knock-on.

Forwards at the line-out should never develop the habit of running back to get a kick into touch. It may come off occasionally and save ground, but it is a risky procedure, and the kick will probably get charged down.

The dummy can often be exploited successfully at the line-outs. The ball is caught clearly—a feint to pass backwards, but instead the body is turned round and a dribble commenced.

In defensive work at the line-out, always remember that the ball and man must be tackled. Often a player catching the ball is able to get in his pass owing to the non-observance of this rule.

Another important point in defence is the necessity for the forwards to gather quickly round the spot where the ball has been thrown. In fact, directly a player realizes the ball is not coming to him he should immediately run behind the person about to receive it, to back up in the loose scrum, or, conversely, to prevent the opposition getting away.

All players must remember that possession of the ball in the line-outs is an important consideration. Possession at all times is important. Even if your own side make little use of it, it precludes the possibility of the opposition doing anything, and generally, with two sides of equal merit, that which gets a



greater share of the ball ought eventually to win the game.

Tactics in the line-out are all-important, for many unexpected moves can be brought off. I say unexpected advisedly. Anything which is not unexpected ought to be easily checked. Remember this, and use any new weapon in attack sparingly, otherwise it soon becomes orthodox. Two halves should work in unison with the forwards at the line-out. Two schemes which Kershaw and I tried, once probably during each game, very often came off. Gardner, one of the forwards, stood close in next to the touch-line. Kershaw threw it to Gardner, who handed it back at once—a safe proceeding, as the distance between the two was only about a yard. Kershaw then flung a wide pass to the three-quarters or myself. The other procedure was for Kershaw to throw it straight to me at the end of the line. This was generally a very effective move in our own “25,” when we were on the defensive. The opposition were then lined back for attack, and it was a simple matter to catch the ball and get in a kick to touch.

But I cannot impress upon my readers too much the importance of using these methods sparingly, otherwise their effectiveness—when the opposition least expect them—is lost.

Another point which must now be considered is the loose scrum.

A loose scrum is generally formed at the line-out, or when a forward dribble has been temporarily or completely checked. The forwards form down gene-

rally in no fixed formation, and an attempt is made to get the ball back to the three-quarters. A forward in a loose scrum should always get into a position where he can see the ball, otherwise his energy will probably be misplaced. Often have I seen a forward rushing blindly into a loose scrum, shoving in any direction, sometimes even helping the opposition in their efforts to wheel, by shoving in the wrong place. The ball can be controlled by any one member of the pack, only if all the forwards can see the ball, and shove in the right direction. A forward's first instinct on joining a loose scrum is to find out exactly where the ball is, and then apply the whole of his shove behind it. In a loose scrum it is difficult for the last three or four players joining the scrum to see the ball. A certain amount of imagination and intelligence ought to indicate the direction of shove. On joining, they must pack low, as in packing low there is a greater chance of finding the ball amongst the sea of legs. Having found the ball, adjust your position so that your shove is in the line of advance.

Clumsiness in a loose scrum is fatal ; good footwork is important, and accuracy and neatness essential.

In a fixed scrum, no forward in the second or third rank touches the ball when it is being heeled. From the nature of a loose scrum, a direct heel is improbable, but it is of the utmost importance that any forward who attempts to heel must be careful not to kick the ball too hard—out of the reach of the scrum half.

A pack of forwards is often judged by its work in the loose scrums, as it is from these that the majority of tries are scored.

Statistics are not available, but I am probably near the mark in stating that 70 per cent. of the tries obtained in first-class football originate from loose scrums—a natural sequence when it is realized that the defence is probably disorganized in attempting to stem the forward rush. So the importance of this phase of a forward's play will be apparent to everybody.

The next point in the training of the embryonic international forward is in regard to breaking away from the scrum, and what to do and where to go after breaking, in the two extreme cases of attack and defence. Let us take the case of attack. The first players to break are the two wing men of the back rank, who should break to the side of the scrum on which they are formed down. Their future path and action will depend upon their relative speed.

It is obviously suicidal for a slow back-rank man to attempt to get up for the inside pass from the wing three-quarter. Even for fast forwards like Voyce, Wakefield, or H. L. Price, it is only just within the bounds of possibility to do so. No hard-and-fast rule can be laid down; a player must adjust his position according to his speed and the situation at the moment, but it will generally be advantageous and the best policy to break and run straight down the field.

One thing a forward must realize—the movement is not finished when the ball is heeled; it is only just commencing. A player who is the quickest to grasp this essential fact soon becomes outstanding. Front-rank forwards naturally cannot break as fast as the back rank, but their general policy should

be the same—to run down the centre of the field in anticipation of the ball returning from the wing three-quarter either by a cross-kick or by reverse passing. In every case break quickly, as the success of the final movement depends on the speed with which you have broken away from the scrum in the initial stages.

In defence, each man in the back rank breaks to his *own* side of the field and makes instantly for the corner flag on that side. The centre man of the back rank breaks to the side to which the attack is directed. Of course, you ask at once: Why is it necessary for one of the wing forwards to break to the opposite side to which the attack is developing? The reason is this—to be successful, it is very necessary for the wing forward to have a good start. Obviously, it is impossible for him to say on which side the attack is to develop, until he has broken from the scrum. This means delay, and this delay might prove fatal to his ultimate chance of success of tackling the opposite wing three-quarter or centre three-quarter breaking through. Break up in the direction I have specified. If by any chance the direction of attack is on the other side, swing round at once. If the attack of the opposition is toward your side of the ground, you have gained the fraction of a second, which is invaluable.

It is almost useless for a wing forward to break by numbers—(1) stand up, (2) look for the direction of the attack, (3) start off in this direction. If this procedure is adopted, he will be too late nine times out of ten.

A forward leads a very busy life, and it would be idle to pretend that he is physically capable of dashing from every scrum to the corner flag in anticipation of tackling the wing three-quarter. He would soon be worn out, and twice or three times across the field like this during a game would fatigue him so much that his general scrummage work would suffer. Break quickly in the direction indicated without a moment's hesitation, sum up the general situation, and endeavour to get to the critical point at the most economical speed.

An alternative scheme, which is considered by many to be better, and which is less fatiguing to the forward breaking, is for him to make straight for the opposite stand-off half. This was the usual procedure adopted in the English team. Pillman or Price, the two wing forwards I have played with, invariably tackled my opposite number, which left me free to roam—to get across to the wing three-quarter if it was necessary.

On these occasions Voyce, the other wing forward in the back rank, packed on the blind side. Not being such a quick breaker, his invariable policy was to prevent the scrum half breaking round the blind side, or, alternatively, to reinforce the defence on that side, as the occasion required.

The main duty of the centre man of the back rank is to ensure that the scrum-half does not break through on the open side. The scrum-half coming round the scrum is very apt to give the dummy, especially when he sees the wing forward making for the stand-off. It is then the bounden duty of the middle man of the back



rank to make certain that the scrum-half does not get very far. If the ball comes out on the blind side, his job (the centre man's) must be to reinforce the defence on that side. The remainder of the pack, as they break, drop back to the centre of the field in anticipation, of course, of defending in case of a cross-kick or inward pass from the opponents' wing three-quarters. Even for the first- and second-rank forwards it is necessary to break quickly, otherwise they lose the second or fraction of a second which means all the difference between just getting there and not.

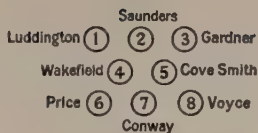
A forward must choose opportune moments for taking "breathers." The faster the game, the more breathers are necessary. Few chances occur, and the question must be studied carefully. A leader of the forwards can help his pack tremendously by allotting fixed places at the line-outs, when the opposition kick off or drop out, etc., to his forwards.

The rough diagram (on the following page) shows how the English team lined out, their approximate places on the field when the opposition were dropping out or kicking off, and their places in the scrum.

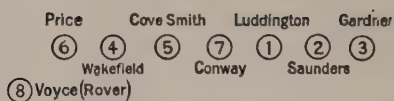
A general glance at the three diagrams will show that the forwards were given places consistent with their formation in the scrum, and, after a careful analysis of the characteristics of the several players. Gardner, Saunders, and Luddington worked together at the line-outs and when the opposition were kicking off. Gardner was next to the touch-line, so as to work the short line-out, with Kershaw. By adopting this formation these three players were always ready to pack down at once, and so prevented any undue



### Scrum.

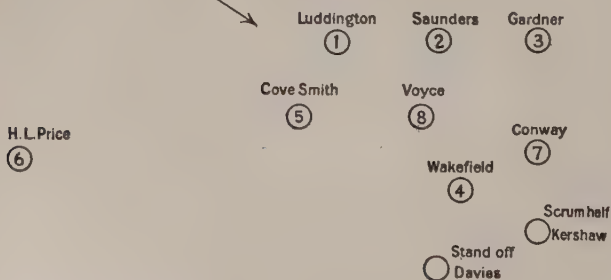


### Line outs



Touch  
Line

Opponents dropping out or kicking off.



delay, which, as every one knows, is very often the cause of bad scrummaging. Moreover, scrums are frequent at the line-out or drop-out, due to petty infringements, and it is very important that the three front-rank men should be together.

Wakefield and Conway, when the opposition were dropping out, were brought back. Both showed a distinct natural ability to catch a ball, which helped Kershaw and myself to open out the game to the three-quarters.

Voyce and Cove-Smith were stationed half-way. Both were useful in the tight work, and were never happier than fighting their way with the ball against three or four of the opposition.

At the line-out, Voyce was given a roving commission, a job well suited to the temperament of the player. H. L. Price invariably marked the blind side—a necessary disposition in the event of the opposition dropping out to this side.

In this distribution, not only do we get the maximum from the individual talents of the respective players, but we conserve the energy of the side, by avoiding a lot of unnecessary running about—an important factor in a very hard game.

In the third row of the scrum, the two outside men push only with one shoulder, and the effectiveness of their shove is reduced considerably. Whether the winging forward is the result of the scrum formation, or whether he is an individual who does not like to push in the scrum, and therefore his best position is in the rear rank, I do not know. First elaborated by Ivor Morgan, of Wales, brought to a greater degree

of perfection by C. H. Pillman, of England, and carried on with equal success by H. L. Price, and in a different but none the less effective measure by Voyce, of Gloucester, he has come to stay.

To be a successful winging forward, you must have pace and the innate footballer's intuition or sense for spotting an opening. You must be alert on the field at all times, mentally as well as physically. Pace is essential. A wing forward is expected to back up the three-quarters in attack and to show a distinct ability to break across the field from the scrum, in defence, to tackle the opposing wing three-quarter.

Versatility is required, as the wing forward is sure to be pulled out of the scrum in case of injury to one of the outsides. Whether he is pulled out because of this extreme versatility or because his absence is less severely felt in the scrum than any other forward I do not know. It was an old familiar saying with the English team that Voyce never pushed in the scrum except in front of the stand when the Selection Committee were looking. Voyce refused to accept any parental responsibility for this progeny, but it never failed to cause intense amusement among us. Voyce as a winging forward is a totally different specimen from Pillman or Price. His speciality is to pick the ball up in a semi-loose rush, fight—there is no other word for it—his way through a *mêlée* of opponents, struggling with him, and emerge triumphant sometimes—sometimes not—but knowing always that he has gained many yards of good ground before he falls, with two or more opponents with him.

Pillman's speciality was the open work. He liked

as much room to work in as a modern stand-off half should have. He was always near the ball in the open field. You could always rely on Pillman taking the opposite stand-off half in defence. In attack, Pillman liked to have a clear field to work in. Voyce, I am sure, would be disappointed if the prologue to his particular movement failed to produce a small scrap.

Both possessed a happy knack of being in the right position if a score seemed probable—Voyce to pick the ball up in the loose and literally fight his way over the line; Pillman to field the ball in his stride from a long pass or cross-kick, leaving the full-back standing hopelessly beaten by yards.

Price is of the Pillman type, and the best modern example of the wing forward. I think Price pushed more in the scrum than Pillman did. Voyce pushes more than either, but less than his fair share.

Can an average modern pack afford to carry two such men as Price and Voyce? Against a pack of genuine scrummagers—No. The remainder of the pack cannot be expected to push enough, and keep on pushing throughout the game, to hold the opposition. If they succeed in holding them, they take so much out of themselves as to militate considerably against their work in the open.

A striking example of this difficulty was illustrated by the English pack in the series of internationals in 1923. Voyce and Price were picked against Wales, and their form in the trials justified their inclusion. Wales possessed a strong pack of hard, solid scrummagers; there were no wingers. We won, it is true, partly by the opportunism of Price in scoring a try



in the first minutes of the game. Price, in his own particular style, played well throughout. So did Voyce—very well. England held the Welshmen in the pack, and beat them in the last ten minutes; but we must realize and face the fact that England never hooked the ball in the scrums, because we had not sufficient push to get it.

Against the light Irish pack, no change was necessary, and the English forwards played well. Could we afford to carry Voyce and Price against Scotland? The Scottish pack held the Welsh pack in Wales, that had previously beaten the English pack at Twickenham, and neither Scotland nor Wales had a recognized winger. Scotland never encourage the type, and I admire the boldness of their policy. Wing forwards are expedients, sometimes useful ones, if they carry their game to the perfection associated with Pillman's play. But in reality they are a luxury, and as a type should not be encouraged.

Although in the two previous matches, and in the trials, Price played well, I think the English Selection Committee were justified in dropping him against Scotland. It was not an easy matter to fill his place. A forward was wanted, prominent in loose rushes—a quick breaker—and yet one who pushed in the scrum. It was fortunate for England that Blakiston was playing at the top of his form, and that his knee was sound enough to stand eighty minutes' hard going at Inverleith. The Selection Committee made no mistake in their choice. Blakiston's experience was invaluable against Scotland, and his game contributed much to our success.

It is a long time since the genius of Ivor Morgan led to a process of development which has landed us into a horribly fast game. It needs no great memory to hark back to the days when the wing forward was non-existent—when the forward's main job was to heel the ball from the scrum. The change is not all clear gain. With the increased speed of modern forward play goes much of the individual cleverness outside. The increased pace is not always a safe guarantee of perfection, and the old-fashioned cut-through is made much more difficult of execution by the presence of the winging and other fast forwards.

Yet the more one sees of modern football, the more one realizes the great importance of speed in a forward, and every forward should endeavour to increase his speed as much as possible.

Having learnt to scrummage, dribble, and catch a ball in the line-out, when and where to break from the scrum, etc., you are better able to take part in a forward's game. Your troubles are not over, however—they are just about to commence. You are now ready to put into general practice the things you have learnt, to discipline yourself to become one of the members of a homogeneous team, to subordinate your own interests and individuality to the rest of the side, to take part freely in every conceivable movement on the field, to feel that your presence is necessary for its successful conclusion—even if the privilege of touching the ball in that particular movement is denied you. Have you thought over the enormous possibilities of the tactics of the game, and how you can form a useful and necessary part in every move-

ment? Having mastered the elementary principles of forward play, you commence to play the game, with all its unforeseen problems and vast possibilities, problems easily solved, nevertheless, if you only think about them.

I will conclude this chapter by leaving the solution of these problems to the reader. Their varying nature, due to different causes on the field, renders it impossible for me to elaborate on them, and they are best left to the individual to study and analyse for himself.

THE CORRECT WAY TO HOLD A RUGBY FOOTBALL



W. J. A. DAVIES



C. A. KERSHAW





## CHAPTER VI

### SCRUM LEADERS

A Slovenly Heel made an Effective Wheel—"Breathers" at Proper Time—"Come on," not "Go on"—Condemn Collectively, not Individually—Do not be Ladylike.

SECOND only in importance to the captain of the side is the leader of the forwards, and most of the qualities necessary for a successful captain are desirable in the leader of the pack. A good leader of forwards does not always make a good captain. Oftentimes have I seen a player leading forwards well, captaining a team badly, and throwing away chances by bad tactics and strategy. On the other hand, no player captaining a team from outside the scrum, however good he may be, can pull a pack of forwards together, and his influence on the pack is infinitesimal. Forwards can only be pulled together by the scrum leader, and it is his paramount duty to guide and control them, and by frequent collaboration with the captain of the side to discuss any change of tactics which may be necessary.

It is generally considered, by those best qualified to judge, that the ideal place from which to lead the scrum is the second row. The leader has a more controlling influence over the pack, and is in closer

personal contact with every member in the tight scrums—an important factor when it is necessary to get the most out of everybody. When leading from the second row, it is much easier to counter the tactics of the opposing scrum, to direct a heel or wheel, and to pick out offenders when things are going wrong. A leader should remember that a slovenly heel may often with great advantage be turned into a very effective wheel, as the opposition are put off by the intention of heeling.

To lead a pack of forwards requires tact, personality, and discretion. More tact is necessary in leading an international scrum, where the leader has not such intimate personal knowledge of the individual members as in leading a club pack. The best advice which can be given to the leader of a pack is to get to know every member thoroughly—all his peculiarities on the field of play. Until a leader has a thorough knowledge of each forward's capabilities and defects, he cannot be said to be first class.

The leader of the pack is responsible for the marking of the opposition at the line-outs, to see that every man is watching his opposite number, and not taking a "breather." This is one of the leader's most important jobs, and is one which is probably more neglected than any of the others. There is a great and growing tendency for forwards, in the fast and open game of the present day, to take a respite occasionally, and few opportunities are better than the line-outs. Such tactics have been fatal in the past, and, of course, may have lamentable consequences. A leader of forwards must see that none of his players shirk their

work in this direction. "Breathers" must be taken at the correct time, when a free-kick is being given, at the drop-outs, etc., but never at the line-out, and it is the duty of the leader to see that this policy is rigidly adhered to.

Fixed places at the line-outs, and when the opposing team is kicking off or dropping out, are assigned to the forwards by the scrum leader, and he is responsible that the blind side of the field is properly marked. A leader of the forwards must remember that his duty does not finish when the dispositions have been arranged, but he alone is responsible that these are kept throughout the game.

The scrum leader must ensure that each forward is packing properly in the scrum and is watching the ball—that the forwards do not kick too hard when dribbling, and that each forward takes part in the dribble and is following up. It is his business to pick out the player who spoiled the wheel or who is packing badly. The scrum leader is the only person to talk in the scrum, and it is his bounden duty to make certain that no other player on his side talks.

A scrum leader must not be too dictatorial, and the individuality of the different members of the pack must not be destroyed or suppressed by harsh leading. Initiative should be encouraged, and a leader whose policy is "Come on," and not "Go on," is more likely to obtain the best results.

It is necessary for a scrum leader to feel his men carefully, so that the maximum is got out of them. Forwards utterly demoralized have been suddenly transformed into a live pack again by the energy and

enthusiasm of the leader. A successful scrum leader will develop the sense of leading men. He should be able to tell exactly when his forwards need a little praise, even when they do not deserve it, and should be able to differentiate quickly between slacking when the pack sorely needs a rest, and slacking from laziness. He should also be able to determine the exact moment when an extra effort is required from his own men.

A leader is solely responsible for the tight work in the scrum ; he must see that the forwards are packing low, that the first rank is binding tightly, that the second row is also binding ; and he should also give the order to break immediately the opposition hook the ball in the scrum. The scrum leader should always let his pack know what his intentions are, so that all can feel active members of the team. He should also come into the front row, if his side are unable to get possession of the ball, so that by his greater experience he will not only, probably, be able to get the ball, but will be in a better position to find out the tactics of the opposite front row which have been defeating his own, and can thus initiate a counter.

A leader must endeavour to keep the morale of his pack at a high level, as it is much easier to pull forwards together whose morale is good. Always encourage and advise. A friendly word of praise spoken to one, heard by all, has a good effect. Condemn your forwards sparingly. It is rarely necessary. If it is, do it collectively, and not individually. It rarely worries a pack of forwards to be abused. It worries an individual almost invari-

ably, and, except for unfair tactics, it need never be done.

Put down unfairness with an iron hand. A team that plays Rugby football without a vestige of unfairness is universally admired. Unfair tactics generally commence in the scrum, where they are less likely to be seen. Of course, it is primarily the duty of the captain to stamp out unfairness. It is not always possible for a captain to see everything in the scrum, whereas the leader of the forwards can, and a leader would be failing in his duty if he failed to keep his men under proper control. Do not let it be inferred that the leader should encourage ladylike habits in his pack. The worst stigma that a pack can have is to be likened to a set of old women. Plenty of boot, and the right use of it, should be encouraged by the leader.

I have been fortunate, in captaining the English team, to have L. G. Brown and Wakefield as leaders of my scrum. Both had a most intimate knowledge of forward play, and were ever ready to discuss the smallest point with me, or any other member of the team, concerning the game. Both had the happy knack of getting the extra effort out of their pack when required. Wodehouse, Greenwood, and H. C. Harrison are other leaders whom I have admired on the field. Wodehouse was of the Wakefield type, who led by precept and example, always on the ball and leading a forward rush.



## CHAPTER VII

### HALF-BACK PLAY

Automatic Orthodoxy—Initiative essential—Breaking away from Base of Scrum—Where to stand—Working the Blind Side—Value of Short Punt—Kershaw's Brilliance.

**H**ALF-BACKS have been described as the pivotal members of the team. Having this fathered upon them, they must assume a parental responsibility, and realize their importance. By the nature of their position on the field, as connecting-links between the forwards and the backs, their play must exercise a considerable influence on the run of the game, and the moral effect to a team of having a sound pair of half-backs is incalculable. I remember very distinctly Johnny Birkett, playing for the Harlequins against the Services soon after the war, discussing the probable chances of his team during the year, stating very positively that they would never approximate to a first-class side until they found a pair of half-backs.

Good work by the forwards cannot be turned to profitable account by the three-quarter backs unless the intermediary position is filled satisfactorily. I use the word "intermediary" very advisedly; but do not let it be understood that the half-backs are

merely intermediaries between the forwards and the three-quarters. Too many are, unfortunately. Even in international football, half-backs are occasionally mere automatons or passing machines. I refer particularly to the French half-backs. Never have more orthodox methods been adopted in international football than by the French half-backs past and present. The scrum-half is a mechanical feeder of his partner, who unremittingly passes the ball on to the three-quarter line. If this policy is persisted in, the task of the opposition is easier.

If one team can keep another team guessing, then the chance of the one is much simpler, and the task of the other infinitely harder. It is easier for the ultimate success of a movement if an opening is made at the base of the scrum or by the stand-off. In fact, in attack, half-backs must make openings for the three-quarter line. This is their main job.

To be a really successful scrum-half you must be quick in your action and movements. Quickness of action is essential in getting the pass out to your partner, in getting round the scrum to tackle your opponent, in picking up the ball from the scrum, or from the feet of opposition forwards in a loose rush—in fact, a scrum-half must be always alert. He must be able to feed his partner as quickly as possible, and his aim should always be to get in an accurate pass to the stand-off half who is going full speed. The pass should be delivered breast-high, *always in front of the receiver*. Many movements have been rendered nugatory, or the stand-off half has been blamed for unnecessary kicking, simply due to the fact that

the pass has been behind, which has delayed or checked him in his stride, just sufficient to render any further transfer to the three-quarter line quite useless.

As regards passing out from the scrum, it is important that the scrum-half should, if possible, keep on his feet and use both hands. Many scrum-halves, in their endeavour to get the ball away quickly, finish the movement lying full length on the ground. This is generally fatal, as it entirely prevents the scrum-half from taking any further part in the movement he has initiated. If he keeps his feet, he is available for backing up the remainder of his side, or to receive the return pass from his partner or one of the three-quarters. I have advocated passing with both hands. The passes are more accurate, which makes the stand-off's job much easier. There are times, however, when a one-handed pass must be given.

The next important point is the necessity for getting quickly round the scrum in order to prevent the opposition scrum-half from passing out. It is a very difficult manœuvre to execute, owing to the formation of the rear rank of the opponents' scrum (*vide* my remarks on scrum formation, in the chapter on Forward Play). Speed and quickness of thought and action are essential for the success of the movement; but care must be taken not to get off-side, if the opposition decide to keep the ball, or if they heel it very slovenly. The quicker you get round the scrum, and the more spoiling you do, the greater the value to your side.

I can commend to the notice of all scrum halves the

importance of increasing their physical strength. It must not be overdone, otherwise there will be a tendency to detract from their speed and quickness of action ; but, consistent with not impairing these two essential qualities, an endeavour should be made to improve and strengthen the muscles and the joints. A scrum-half's lot in modern football is a strenuous one. He must be capable of taking a lot of hard knocks. Forwards of to-day are no respecters of persons, and the stronger physically the scrum-half, the less chance there is of his getting crocked, and the better is he able to go through a hard game unscathed.

A scrum-half must cultivate the habit of falling on the ball—a most valuable asset in defence, and one which has stopped in the initial stages of the movement many forward rushes. This is when they should be stopped—at their commencement, before they have had time to gather momentum. He should work in conjunction with the leader of the forwards, and with the pack in all the close work. He must let them know instantly, and in a clear voice, when the ball is coming in and on which side. Oftentimes have I heard a subdued moan from the forwards because the scrum-half has not let them know this in good time. A scrum-half can be of great assistance to his leader of the pack, in letting him know which way to wheel, when to heel or keep it. He should also shout "Ball's away," "Break," "They have it," etc., depending on the circumstances.

Many scrum-halves in the past have been mere passing machines from the base of the scrum to

their partners. Not only is the side handicapped by this lack of initiative in attack, but the opposition can concentrate the whole of the defence on the stand-off half, and so make his task of cutting through far more difficult. I have seen many scrum-halves break away from the scrum, leading a loose dribble, but I have seen a few only break away with the ball in their hands. Kershaw, of course, is an exception. Not only is he quick off the mark and in action, but he is fast, and, moreover, a strong runner, who gets into his full stride very quickly. Many of our successful movements were due to Kershaw breaking away with the ball from the base of the scrum. Consider the tactical advantage gained by this manœuvre. Not only is he able to create an opening himself, but he keeps the opposition from concentrating too much on the stand-off half. He is able to time his passes to his partner at a much more opportune moment than he otherwise could, and he also is a much freer agent himself. I say quite unreservedly that this characteristic made Kershaw the most outstanding scrum-half of his time, and contributed more than anything else to our success as a combination during the last four years.

I can commend this characteristic to all scrum-halves for their benefit. Half-back play has been revolutionized by it, and the possibilities of inter-half combination and play are increased a hundred-fold.

The stand-off half controls the tactics and strategy of the game, and consequently should be the most



versatile footballer in the team, with an eye for an opening. This should be his strongest point, the ability to see an opening for attack, to realize instantly the weakness of the opposition's defence at any particular moment. As a footballer, he should possess what is commonly called a safe pair of hands, which is interpreted, in these days of abnormalities, as a player who not only catches a ball easily, but who can hold anything that comes within reach of him, and can gather all sorts and conditions of passes in his stride. Some critics aver that hands such as I have described are born, not made. True, certain people possess these characteristics in a more marked degree than others, but I am a believer in the old adage that "Miracles of genius are miracles of labour," and am convinced, and I hope these few words will do something to convince others—which, by the way, is part of the object of this book—that any inherent defects, as I have just pointed out, can be overcome by practice.

Speed off the mark is the next desirable characteristic for a first-class outside-half. Of course, the ability to get into full stride quickly is an asset which every footballer will find most useful, but in no position is it of such primary importance as in the case of the stand-off half. This is only natural when the circumstances of the attack are taken into consideration. The orthodox attack usually commences with the ball at rest in the scrum, to be finally received by one of the three-quarters going at full speed. In 60 per cent. of the cases the stand-off half receives the ball direct from the scrum, and it is this ability to get into

his stride quickly which often determines the ultimate issue of the attack. Not only by this characteristic does he speed up the whole attacking movement, but the opposition is more likely to be caught unawares. With a greater reserve of speed, he is better able to gather all the bad passes which are oftentimes sent from the scrum, due not always to the failure of the scrum-half, but consequent on the necessity of getting the ball away from the scrum at the utmost speed.

In these days of fast breaking forwards, when the game is tending to become faster, speed over the ground as well as speed off the mark is essential. Many stand-off halves do not possess the requisite speed to carry out any movement successfully.

There is no doubt that increased speed does enhance his tactical possibilities to a very large extent. It facilitates cutting through. In defence, it is invaluable for getting across to tackle the wing three-quarter, or to help the back, and my advice to all stand-off halves is to develop speed as much as possible.

A stand-off half should be able to give a good pass with both hands, and with equal facility in either direction. This can easily be developed and made perfect by practice. His kicking should also be developed to a very high degree with both feet, as the stand-off, more than any other person, will find opportunities for kicking, especially in defence.

As I have said, the main business of a stand-off half is to create openings for the three-quarter line, and his first consideration in attack is to endeavour to beat his opposite number, and, if possible, to draw another opponent, preferably one of the centre three-

quarters. This can be done in various ways—swerve, dummy, side-step, or by cutting through a gap. Each must be tried in turn, remembering always that the least expected is more likely to succeed.

Knowing where to stand is a valuable factor in attack, and I always endeavoured to stand, if I was able, on a line midway between the opposite stand-off and one of the centres. My policy was generally to shape a course so that I ran towards the opposite centre, the object being to draw him if possible, as well as my own opposite number. To employ these tactics, it is generally necessary to stand as far away from the scrum as possible, and I can thoroughly recommend all stand-off halves to stand far away, consistent with the scrum-half being able to pass the ball to you with a fair degree of accuracy.

No definite distance can be laid down, as obviously climatic conditions and other causes will have an important bearing on this distance; but there is no doubt that the further away one stands, the more chance there is of varying the attack, and the more chance one gets of eluding the curse of all stand-off halves in present-day Rugger, the fast breaking wing forwards of the rear rank. The presence of these breaking away from the scrum, even if they never succeed in tackling you, cramps your movements considerably. Not only are you conscious of the fact that they are in the offing, but many times have I been pulled down, apparently from behind, actually by a wing forward coming up sideways, unforeseen, after I have beaten my opposite number and thought I was clear away.

The next question which comes to my mind is where one should stand relative to the scrum. Generally speaking, I always stood two or three yards on the side of the scrum to which I intended to go. Standing immediately behind the scrum hampered one's movements in avoiding opposition forwards. If the scrum was near the touch-line, and there was no chance of working the blind side, I invariably stood about five or six yards on the open side of the field. In the first instance, standing, as I have said, about two or three yards away gives you a chance of working the blind side successfully without the opposition realizing it. To work the blind side standing five or six yards away on the open side cannot be done. Standing two or three yards away camouflages your intention, and allows you to make a yard or two on the open side as a feint, before receiving the ball, and getting away on the blind side. Your opposite number, unsuspecting, comes up to tackle you on the wrong side of the scrum. Do not make this feint too often in a game. It is a device which, worked regularly, becomes useless—used occasionally, it sometimes bluffs the opposition, and may help you materially in getting away on the blind side. Do not work the blind side too frequently. Generally, the blind side can be worked more successfully by the scrum-half and the wing three-quarter than by the two halves. There is little room on the blind side for a stand-off half to manœuvre in, and this cramps his style considerably, especially as he is used to open work.

As a general rule, until you have summed up the strength and weaknesses of your opponent, stand

opposite to him. You must not let the opposing stand-off get through your defence. Having made certain of this, stand as far away from the scrum as possible.

This raises the important question of the best tactics to employ defensively, and I unhesitatingly say that the stand-off half ought to be responsible for his opposite number in defence. Many stand-off halves do not take their opposite number, but endeavour to get across the field to tackle the wing three-quarter, leaving the opposite stand-off half to be tackled by one of the centres. Practised constantly, I see no reason why this system, provided every one knows his job thoroughly, should not be made fool-proof; but to get the most out of the game in attack, a stand-off half should study the movements of his opposite number very carefully, and this intimate knowledge ought to prove invaluable to him in defence. Moreover, the centre tackling the half is an innovation which is used so infrequently that a player not accustomed to it will probably be lost when playing in trials, or other important games, where this policy is rarely carried out.

After all, when the circumstances of the case are analysed thoroughly, why should the centre take the stand-off half? Only because the stand-off half is too slow to get there himself, and the centre is forced to go eventually for the man with the ball. This act soon becomes a habit, and the habit, continued long enough, lands you into a groove which it is sometimes very difficult to get out of. No, go for your opposite number; it is the best advice which a stand-off half



can be given. If the half is a wee bit slow in getting up to his opponent, then the centre three-quarter must have patience with him and adjust his position accordingly, so that the opposition are shepherded across the field. These are the best tactics—to make certain that your opponents are made to run across the field. You will find in nine cases out of ten that your policy is helped materially by their extreme willingness to go there.

As I have said before, to beat your man, you must either run straight through a gap, swerve past your opponent, sell him a dummy, or side-step him, movements which need not be elaborated upon here. But there is just one method of attack, the short punt, which I should like to dwell upon. I have found it a very useful method of attack only when the opposite three-quarter line is standing well up in defence, right on top of your own three-quarter line, so that invariably your three-quarter is tackled in possession almost as soon as he receives the ball. To make the opposition lie further back, it is often useful to short-punt over their heads. It requires a great deal of skill and accuracy to get the correct height and distance with your kick. The speed at which you are going precludes the possibility of steadying yourself. It is useless to kick too far, otherwise the full-back will field the ball. I remember two occasions where these tactics were useful. In the England *v.* Ireland match of 1923, the Irish three-quarter line was standing so close up, sacrificing everything for defence, that there was no other policy left open for us. A consultation with the three-quarters convinced me of the fact that

ad.



A SHORT PUNT AND A QUICK FOLLOW-UP

a short punt ahead was our best policy, and it soon proved successful. Their line soon became disintegrated and fell further back, and we reverted to the normal methods of attack again. The other occasion was in the England *v.* Scotland match of 1922, at Twickenham. We were three points down at the time. The ball was heeled from our scrum. Kershaw picked it up and dashed away. I was in close attendance. He went too far, so as to render a pass to me utterly worthless. He short-punted. I was into my full stride in a flash, caught it on the bounce going full speed, with only Forsyth to beat. Unfortunately, I slipped when trying to get past him and was tackled, but we were within three yards of their line. The moral effect was tremendous. Our tails were right out straight, and it was only a matter of minutes before we scored again, to win the match easily.

Do not use the short punt too often. Do not be obsessed with the idea that it is even an alternative method of attack. It is only a device which may be useful in driving back a line of three-quarters who are standing too close to your own line. Put it away in the bag and dole it out as sparingly as you can, remembering always that the less you bring it out, the more unexpected it becomes, and the greater is the chance of it defeating the opposition.

Two types of short punt are recommended, the one just over the heads of the three-quarter line, almost straight down the field, to be caught by yourself, partner, or centre three-quarter. This is a very difficult feat to get the exact distance, and requires

much practice. The other is kicked to the wing three-quarter in the direction in which the movement is tending to go. It requires less skill and is more easy of execution, owing to the relatively greater length of the kick. In this case, after running a certain distance, a high kick towards the touch-line, in the hope that the wing three-quarter will catch it in his stride or on the first bounce, is your object. Anything caught on the bounce is lucky. You will be luckier if your kick is sufficiently accurate to enable the wing three-quarter to catch it without bouncing, so you see that the success of the movement is very problematical.

In defence, both halves should be able to kick with either foot, but this quality, although desirable in a scrum-half, is an essential characteristic for a stand-off half, as he, more than any other person in the team, will be able to save his forwards and his side by good defensive kicking into touch. Although not essential for a scrum-half, opportunities present themselves, where a scrum-half materially assists his forwards by kicking to touch. Kershaw rarely kicked to touch. In fact, during four consecutive years of first-class football I doubt whether Kershaw ever kicked the ball more than a dozen times. This is a remarkable fact, but nevertheless true. Kershaw was a good kick if occasion required, with a perfect swing and good timing, and yet I have known him play almost throughout a season without kicking a ball in a game. Yet he never failed to practise kicking. A stand-off half must of necessity be a good kick—a good screw-kick to touch, with an eye for an opening for dropping goals, as he, more than any



other person, will probably be provided with many opportunities for dropping a goal. So also will the scrum-half, so do not neglect this art of kicking.

I have endeavoured to enlarge upon the several characteristics which are necessary and desirable for both halves in their respective positions to possess, but it is their combination and play as a pair which determines their real worth to a side. Individually they may be brilliant, collectively they may be mediocre—for some reason which is generally unexplainable. A far greater asset to any side is a pair of half-backs who are sound individually and brilliant collectively. A team possessing such a pair will be well served, and the moral effect on the side will soon be felt.

In attack, a pair of half-backs are quite independent of the striking power of their three-quarter line, but individually, and as a pair, they must remember that the three-quarter line is the main factor when attacking, so both must be utterly unselfish players, and be able to subdue their individuality when the occasion demands it, as the possibilities of combined attack are enormous.

A pair of half-backs must be just as effective in defence as in attack. Halves, more than any other players on their side, must be past masters in the art of counter-attacking. An attack which can be started when the opponents least expect it, or in the direction least expected, is the one most likely to be successful, and no players are in such a good position to initiate these counter-attacks as the halves.

How do two individuals make themselves into a pair of half-backs? As I have said before, but it will bear

reiteration, only when two half-backs have a thorough knowledge of each other's capabilities and defects can they be said to be a real pair, or to have achieved international class.

To be a successful pair of half-backs, you must always hunt together on the field. If the scrum-half breaks away from the scrum, make certain that you are with him. In fact, make this backing-up become an instinct and second nature. Make it a golden rule that you will never be more than from five to ten yards away from your partner in any movement, varying your distance as circumstances require. Always keep your position relative to him. If you do this, you will be a real pair; in fact, an international pair, if you possess the ordinary football gifts as well. Do not think it is an easy matter. It is not. It is the most difficult thing in the world to do, and yet you will be well rewarded if you can bring yourself to do it instinctively. No pair of half-backs could have better advice given to them.

The next point is to study carefully the weak and strong points of your partner. Play up to his strength as much as ever you can, and nurse his weaknesses, and, if possible, cover him in all his movements. Be sure that part of your daily football training is carried out with him, so that you can study carefully all the points peculiar to him. It is only by rigid concentration upon each other that you will be able to make yourselves into an efficient pair. It is idle to suppose that two fellows can go on the field, play the game, come off the field, and not discuss its finer points afterwards. Kershaw and I never missed an opportunity

of discussing any phase of half-back play, or any phase of the Rugby game, whether it was a forward point, three-quarter, or concerned the full-back. We were never tired of discussing even the minutest detail on every occasion.

In Wales there was always a decided tendency to encourage the interdependence of the two halves, and Owen and Jones, the Swansea halves, represented Wales for a long period.

There is little doubt in my own mind about the wisdom of this policy. Two brilliant individuals from different clubs have been known to be unable to combine—*vide* Owen and Bush for Wales. Unfortunately, they played for separate clubs, and were thus deprived of the excellent opportunity of companionship, which is a very necessary factor.

In modern football there are few movements in which the two would not be engaged together, and it is essential, not only during the game, but in the preparation for the game, that they should only be parts of one whole, with a single policy. They must not fight or play for their own hand, otherwise there will be a dangerous weakening of their combined effort. I have noticed this oftentimes during a game, when one or the other of us has gone just a little too far with his own particular movement, when the other was at hand ready to carry on the good work. Many times, in fact the greater number of times, it was done unconsciously, thinking we could get through on our own, but we never failed to remind each other on these occasions about the stupidity of our folly. It brought home to us the necessity of not ever neglect-

ing your partner. The same remarks, of course, can be applied to every individual in the team. Never play for your own hand. Always play up to the other fourteen men, shaping your tactics so that the next best person is available to carry on the movement.

Wales, I think, was the first country to develop the club half principle for international football. Of course, they were lucky, in their choice of Owen and Jones, and, later, Owen and Trew, in having two club-mates of exceptional merit individually and as a pair.

Since the war, the tables have been reversed, and no pair of outstanding merit have been discovered in Wales, whereas England has stuck to one pair of half-backs, with the exception of a single match, for four seasons, a factor which the critics aver has had a considerable moral effect on the English team. As I have said before, Wales set the example, but the other countries, from circumstances probably beyond their immediate control, were slow to realize this. Each player must be of international class separately, and then collectively, if they study each other's methods very closely, they should become a brilliant pair.

Although I am a firm believer in the pair of club half-backs as an international pair, I am also convinced that the unanimity of purpose which must exist between them cannot be of the best value to the side unless it exists just as truly and effectively off as well as on the field. Besides discussing the various details of the previous or future games, Kershaw and I invariably arranged our training to coincide. If there was ever a chance to play squash or take any other form of exercise together which formed part







(TOP) INTER-HALF PASSING **AT** FULL SPEED

NOTE FOLLOW-THROUGH OF KERSHAW'S ARMS.

(BOTTOM) A LOW GATHER AND PASS FROM THE GROUND

of our training, we rarely missed an opportunity. Of course, we were fortunately placed, both being stationed at Portsmouth for four years, which helped us tremendously. Showing an equal keenness and skill in most phases of athletics, arrangements were easily made to fit, and this intimate relationship had, I am sure, a direct bearing on our play on the Rugger field, which stood us in very good stead. Unfortunately, we never went through a season without a serious break for injuries, and other causes, which militated against our producing the best combined effort ever.

Before the advent of Kershaw to first-class football, a scrum-half's main rôle in attack was to feed his partner unremittingly. Perhaps near the goal-line, a scrum-half, by his daring in making a short dash, would score a try. But his initiative in attack generally ended there. Although Kershaw was fully alive to the possibilities of this particular movement, it was in his bursts away from the scrum, to be ready for an interchange of passes with his partner, that his extreme cleverness lay. He was quick off the mark and fast over the ground. In fact, for half the length of the field he was as fast as any other member of the side. Kershaw was also exceptionally quick in recovering an upright position, after gathering the ball from the ground. These characteristics, combined with great physical stamina, made him the most outstanding half-back of his day.

Kershaw revolutionized scrummage half-back play, because he was bold enough to initiate attacks from the base of the scrum almost as successfully as the

modern stand-off half. In fact, many critics consider that Kershaw would soon achieve international class as a stand-off, possessing an exceptionally safe pair of hands, and being very fast off the mark, with a quick eye for an opening.

Until Kershaw arrived, a scrum-half fed his partner unremittingly. Kershaw changed all this, and not only by his policy did he add an extra player to the attack, but the strategical importance of the stand-off half was increased considerably. In pre-war days the attacking powers of a team outside the scrum were reduced considerably by an excessive concentration on the stand-off half—until then the pivot of the attack. Ireland fell into this trap against England at Dublin in 1922. What was the result? Kershaw cut through brilliantly on four distinct occasions, from each of which we scored a try. Moreover, Kershaw's policy made the halves a separate attacking force outside, and quite independent of, the three-quarter line.

His weakness lay in his slowness in getting round the scrum to spoil his opposite number, and his inability to give a reverse pass.

In this respect Kershaw was inferior, and a very poor second at that, to Dix, the Gloucester scrum-half. I have never seen anybody quicker round the scrum or anybody give a reverse pass better than Dix. Certainly Dix erred on the side of over-keenness, and was often penalized for off-side by the referee, and rightly so; but at the same time a scrum-half who is not penalized occasionally for off-side is not worth very much. A game must be played as

daringly as the circumstances admit, and from the nature of a slovenly heel or wheel, the chances of a scrum-half getting off-side, quite inadvertently, are great, and I can recommend all scrum-halves to realize this. Over-keenness can easily be differentiated from unscrupulous methods. Every scrum-half must be thoroughly alive to the importance of getting round the scrum.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THREE-QUARTER-BACK PLAY

“ Intense ” Backing-up—Main Duty of the Centre—Ronald Poulton’s Characteristics—Tactics and Generalship—The Successful Wing—Lowe and Smallwood—A Remarkable Side-step.

THE three-quarter line is the main attacking unit of the team, and much of the subject-matter in the last chapter on the play and characteristics of a stand-off half apply with equal force to the centre three-quarter.

A centre three-quarter must possess the ability to make openings for his wing three-quarter, and be able to forecast the movements of his stand-off half—a habit which can only be acquired by excessive concentration.

When taking up his position relative to the stand-off half in any movement, the centre three-quarter must make certain that this distance is never increased. Shortened it may be, eventually, depending on the circumstances, but it should never be increased while the stand-off half has the ball. This “intense” backing-up—for it is nothing more—is not easy. In the first place, the centre three-quarter must realize the intention of his stand-off half. The latter may shoot off in any direction. Circumstances change so quickly



during the game that it is often impossible for the half to make up his mind beforehand about the plan of attack, and this precludes the possibility of letting the centre know. Hence the necessity of realizing as soon as possible the intentions of the stand-off half.

Unless a centre is gifted with a certain imagination, he commences the movement at a great disadvantage. It is analogous to racing with a man who starts the race himself, always at the least expected moment. To neutralize this, the centre three-quarter should be a little faster than the stand-off half, so that the initial advantage which the half possessed is countered by the greater reserve of speed of the centre three-quarter. Kershaw and I always laboured under this slight disadvantage when playing. We were, both of us, fast for halves, off the mark and over the ground, which made it very difficult for centre three-quarters to be with us in any particular movement, unless they were fully alive to the importance of getting off the mark quickly at the right moment. The inherent capacity of knowing when to start must stand a centre in good stead in such cases. Hammett, one of the best centres in England on his day, was slow over the ground, but rarely was he not in his right place when required, due to the inherent quality of football position or sense which he possessed, and to the fact that he was quick off the mark.

A centre three-quarter must have a safe pair of hands, and, like the stand-off half, should be able to receive all kinds of passes, and be able to give good passes. The stand-off half and the centre three-quarter

are the sifting machines. All the bad passes from the scrum and those picked up in the loose are passed through the sifting machines, the outside half and the centre, for the final pass, which should be irreproachable, to the wing. The pass to the wing should approximate to perfection—timed at the right moment, given breast-high when the wing is travelling at full speed. If not, much of the wing three-quarter's attention is taken up in endeavouring to gather his pass, and he will be unable to develop the maximum speed required to get round his opposite number and the full-back. How often have we lamented the non-scoring of an otherwise certain try because the final transfer was not accepted, due to the way in which it was given? A wing three-quarter going all out must have his course cleared and made smooth for him—the main duty of the centre.

For four years preceding the war, no personality more completely dominated the Rugger world than Ronald Poulton. I do not know how Poulton compared with Gwyn Nichols, Vassal, or other players of earlier days. It is difficult to compare players of different decades. It is even difficult sometimes to compare players of the same era, to put them in their right place on the seniority list, but the surest thing that can be said about Poulton is that he will rank with the best. To put him in his exact position is beyond me. What characteristics did Poulton possess which raised him to his pedestal of greatness? An extraordinary deceptive run and swerve made him a most difficult player to tackle. Poulton ran with his head well back, ball in outstretched arms, with

the body and arms swaying perceptibly from side to side. To look at the ball in Poulton's hands when you were about to tackle him courted disaster. The only safe way to make sure of tackling him, or to get oneself into the best position to attempt to tackle him, was to watch his legs and knees very carefully.

Poulton possessed abnormal football position or sense. Never do I remember getting away without the faithful Poulton in attendance. He was always there to carry on the movement. "Intense" backing-up was Poulton's speciality—no innate quality this, but one which can be acquired by every Rugby footballer. Make this quality an instinct—nay, a second nature—and you've gone a long way on the path to fame on the football field. This "intense" backing-up was a feature, and the main reason for the Harlequin success during the Stoop era. The Harlequins threw the ball about, or, in other words, gave it plenty of air. It was made possible by the plethora of speed outside. The Stoops, John Birkett, Poulton, Lambert, and Brougham were no slouches, and I doubt if a nicer adjustment of speed in a team outside the scrum ever existed. The wings were faster than the centres, centres faster than the stand-off half, who was very quick off the mark, and all above the average—an ideal combination.

Nothing has approached this standard of excellence in post-war Rugby. The 1923 Scotland team have greater possibilities than any other combination I can think of. There is a good adjustment of speed, which is so rare nowadays—a point often overlooked.

A centre three-quarter, as much as a stand-off half,

must realize the importance of tactics and generalship, as the centre three-quarter in conjunction with the outside half shape the ultimate destiny of the game outside the scrum, and the best advice I can give centres is to study assiduously the various moves in a game, and the potential strength and weakness of the opposition. Avoid their strength and concentrate your forces on their weaknesses. Take great care to analyse the strength and weakness of your wing three-quarter. Play up to his strength and nurse his weaknesses. Collaborate with your stand-off half and get to know his ways thoroughly.

The distance at which a centre three-quarter should stand away from the stand-off half, like the distance at which a stand-off half stands away from the scrum, depends on a variety of circumstances, and will probably alter during different games, due to climatic conditions, relative speeds, and other causes. Generally speaking, stand as far away as possible, consistent with the possibility of receiving a good pass and the necessity of giving your wing three-quarter room to manœuvre and run in. Most wing three-quarters like to receive the ball in a clear field, and not when they are hemmed in by opponents and the touch-line.

A centre three-quarter, more than any other player, should cultivate the habit of running straight and not across the field. By this I mean that your direction of attack should be parallel to the touch-line. Whether it is by side-stepping or swerving, reminiscent of Gracie, or by straight running, like Myers, always follow the same general rule—endeavour to run straight, and

make every effort to straighten out the movement if it is running too much across. Do not think from my previous remarks that you will always be able to run straight. No, from the formation outside, it is impossible for a stand-off half to run absolutely straight, i.e. parallel to the touch-line. He must run across, due to the nature of his position relative to the scrum. His natural tendency to run across slightly must be corrected as soon as possible, and the corrective effort can best be supplied by one of the centre three-quarters, otherwise the wing three-quarter would be forced into touch. The centre three-quarter must endeavour, therefore, to cut out an opening for the wing, who will receive the ball going as nearly as possible parallel to the touch-line. Examine the tremendous advantage to the wing three-quarter receiving the ball while travelling on a course parallel to the touch-line. He is free to swerve either to the right or left of his opponent, and, moreover, he is on the shortest path that will carry him to the line. If the movement is not straightened, he is faced with nothing but the touch-line, or the alternative of having to stop, to turn inwards again to defeat his opponent, a movement clearly destined to disaster in these days of fast breaking forwards, and the least he can be expected to do—and he will be lucky sometimes to do this—is to get in his kick to touch.

The close and intimate relationship which exists between the play of a centre three-quarter and that of a stand-off half necessitates almost identical qualities for both, and in my chapter on stand-off half play I note the importance of defensive and attacking kicking.



A centre three-quarter should develop his kicking to a very high degree with both feet. Kicking the ball on the run is no easy matter. The timing is much more difficult than when standing still, and requires careful practice. Screw-kicking to touch should be developed, as frequent occasions will arise during a game when a centre three-quarter has gathered a loose pass from one of his colleagues, or from the feet of the opposing forces, to find that a screw-kick into touch is very necessary, if any good is to be gained from his gather. In attack, kick very little. Used very sparingly, the short punt is a most valuable alternative method of attack; but remember that William Webb Ellis, in 1823, first ran with the ball in his hands, and gave birth to the distinctive feature of the Rugby game. Short punts ahead, even if skilfully placed, are certainly alternative methods of attack. If badly placed, they are worse than useless; they will lead you into endless difficulties. Practise it by all means, but do not let its use become an obsession, as is so often the case.

Other pronounced characteristics which some of the most outstanding three-quarters of the day possess are extreme cleverness in picking up the ball from the ground, regaining an upright position, and getting into their full stride again at once. Gracie is the best example of this type in modern Rugby. Myers is another good example.

Centre three-quarters should acquire the habit of falling on the ball—the only method sometimes of stopping forward rushes, especially on a wet day. G. V. Stephenson, the Irish international, excelled in

this method of saving, and always showed a large amount of courage in diving for a ball on the ground. Players must be careful to fall in the right way, with the body between the opponent and the ball.

A centre three-quarter should be able to tackle well. It discourages a team to see its defence pierced in the centre through bad tackling, and the moral effect of having two safe tacklers in the centre is tremendous. A centre three-quarter, like the stand-off half, must be a versatile footballer. His football education must be based on broad principles and not on specialization. All the natural products of a Rugby footballer must be found in him, and all should be developed to an equal degree. Undue specialization in any particular phase of the game, at the expense of a broad football knowledge and sound attainments, should be discouraged.

To be a successful wing three-quarter, you must have speed. Speed is not the only essential quality. Often one hears the remark, "He is a speed merchant only," and the player is immediately classed in a low category. Besides speed, all the other qualities of a natural footballer should be developed as well, i.e. the power to swerve and side-step, hand off, field and kick a ball, etc.

Let us examine the characteristics of a few of our most successful players in the past to realize what the attributes are which make an outstanding wing. Of the modern wing three-quarters, Lowe is the best example. Lowe was fast, very fast, but not exceptionally so, not as fast as Liddell, the Scottish wing three-quarter. Lowe's speed made him a good wing

three-quarter. His other football gifts made him a class wing three-quarter. He possessed a very natural swerve going at full speed which did not check his way, but his strongest point was his tackling. Rarely has Lowe missed his man, and being only nine stone in weight, there can be no doubt that the tackle was always made in the most perfect manner. Lowe's defensive power was not only confined to his own wing. Many times, nay, scores of times, have we seen Lowe anticipate a movement of the opposition, dash across to the opposite wing and bring down the other wing three-quarter. I remember one of our Service three-quarters, H. W. V. Stephenson, the Irish international, do the same thing on many occasions. Speed is necessary, not abnormal speed, but above all the power to anticipate the movement of the opposition, so that the wing commences to run across at the right time.

Another characteristic which Lowe possessed—and a valuable one too—was the power to kick a good length to touch, when close to the touch-line. Often have I seen Lowe pick up the ball about five yards from the right touch-line and, with a good left-footed hook, gain thirty yards.

Lowe, of course, owing to his exceptionally small physique, could not be a strong runner, and it was a comparatively easy matter to pull him down even when going at his maximum speed. Lowe, again, was not quick off the mark, at least not exceptionally so, and he never developed his full speed until after the first twenty-five yards. These facts are quoted to show exactly the characteristic qualities of the most out-

standing wing three-quarter of the present decade, whose record of twenty-five consecutive international matches, interrupted by five years of war, is one which will probably last for many years. Only once do I remember Lowe being temporarily crooked in an important match—in his last international match at Colombes, Paris, where his efficiency was impaired considerably by a twisted ankle in the first few minutes of the game. To have played through twenty-five international matches without being injured, and to have got through the large amount of defensive work that Lowe did—probably more than any other player—gives one an idea how perfectly his tackles were made.

Let us now examine the peculiar characteristics of Smallwood, the other English wing. Smallwood, when at Cambridge, played in the centre, ran very straight, but showed a very decided tendency to drop his passes, due to the fact that he kept his eye on his would-be tackler instead of the ball. By a stroke of genius, the English Selection Committee decided to play him on the wing, and the experiment was eminently successful. No one is more difficult to stop when under way, and Smallwood always excels and is most dangerous when running straight for the line, never deviating very far from a path within five yards of touch. I cannot explain to the beginner how to do this. Opportunities create the capacity to do it, so the only advice I can give is to cultivate straight running by assiduously practising it. Smallwood, of course, is physically strong, of fairly big stature, which helps him considerably in brushing aside any half-hearted tacklers.



Smallwood is a good natural kick, also a drop-kick. This art of kicking should not be forgotten by wing three-quarters. Smallwood dropped a goal against Wales which gave England the match in 1923. Lowe dropped a goal against Ireland in 1921, at Twickenham. Hirst, the Welsh wing, dropped a goal against England at Twickenham in 1914. So that chances come and recur, even for wing three-quarters. Do not hesitate to develop in this direction, therefore.

Wing three-quarters, like all other players, should use both feet for kicking ; one is wanted after doubling inwards and then kicking to touch, the other for the kick across—one of the most valuable methods of attack which a wing three-quarter can employ when he is hemmed in and unable to get round his opposite number. Moreover, it gives your forwards an opportunity to excel in fast backing-up. No finer combined movement is ever seen on a football field than a quick heel from a scrum, a bout of passing along the three-quarter line, and a kick across by the wing three-quarter, which is finally fielded by one of the forwards tearing down the field at full speed—perhaps the hooker. And what more just reward could he have for his hooking? Do not overdo the kick across as a wing three-quarter. Remember your first function on the field is to get round your opposite number. My advice to all wing three-quarters is: Always try to get round him. Try again if it does not succeed at first. Try the third time when the second is unsuccessful. That is your job.

The only other outstanding characteristic in a wing three-quarter which I think deserves special mention



is the hand-off possessed by Vincent Coates, who played for England in 1913. Possessed of no exceptional speed, Coates was a strong runner, who ran with his head half turned to the right (he was a left wing), which gave one the impression that he was waiting and was anxious to hand-off some one. He ran with his right hand out, about the height of the middle of his thigh, so as to annul the effect of a would-be low tackler. I remember quite distinctly two players lying prostrate within three yards of the touch-line, after endeavouring to tackle Coates, who avoided them and sailed in with a try. This was in one of the international trial matches at Twickenham. If we can combine the exceptional qualities possessed by wings like Lowe, Liddell, Smallwood, and Coates—the exceptional speed, ability to tackle, the power to run straight and avoid would-be tacklers, with an ability to hand-off—then we must produce an ideal wing three-quarter, and, as I have said before, all these can be developed by practice. No doubt each of the individuals mentioned possessed an abnormal amount of any one of these peculiarities in the first place, the product, perhaps, of an accidental growth, but I am certain these powers could have only been developed to the extent they were by constant practice.

There is just one other point which I will mention. It deserves to be mentioned, as there is little doubt that the art of side-stepping, as practised and developed by Chapman, made it a very difficult manœuvre to counter. It is a difficult thing to do; it is a difficult thing to explain even how to do it. The best example or analogy I can give is that of a boxer who by a swift

jump or side-step avoids your blow. Chapman, by a side-step either way, sometimes a series of side-steps, avoided your tackle. I have never seen anybody approach him in cleverness in this respect. Johnson, the Welsh international, possesses a side-step, but it is a mere shadow compared with Chapman's. I found the only way to counter it was *not* to rush at him.

To hark back for a while to the most essential quality of a wing three-quarter: speed. I have often been asked how fast a wing three-quarter should be. An answer to this simple question is hard to find. Liddell, on the racing track, ran a hundred yards in  $9\frac{7}{10}$  seconds—a record. Liddell is the fastest wing three-quarter I have ever played against, and his speed on the football field impresses you considerably.

No other wing three-quarter has ever impressed me with his abnormal speed. It will probably be a near approximation to the truth, that anyone who can do the hundred yards in  $10\frac{3}{4}$  seconds, or less, will be a fast wing three-quarter on the football field.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LAST LINE OF DEFENCE

Moral Effect of a Safe Fielder—Finding Touch with either Foot—Forsayth's Kicking—Importance of Tackling—Question of Speed—The Full-back in Attack—Necessity for Constant Practice.

THE full-back, the last line of defence of a Rugby football team—the rock on which many attacking ships founder—should have all defensive qualities developed to a very high degree. Primarily a full-back is given a goal-line to defend, and only when he has learned to do this can he develop his attacking powers. The two most important characteristics generally found in a full-back are good defensive kicking and the ability to tackle. No doubt, to the average critic and spectator, these are considered to be two main factors for success, but as a captain of a side, who has played with full-backs of varying degrees of quality, I unhesitatingly say that a safe pair of hands and an ability to field a ball cleanly are more important. The moral effect on the remainder of the team of having a safe fielder is inestimable. The mental strain is relieved when a full-back catches the ball cleanly. The reverse obtains, the mental tension is accentuated, by misfielding. The importance

of relieving this tension cannot be overestimated, especially in defence. It is a point which is very often overlooked. Also a clean fielder is more apt to get in a successful kick to touch, since the movement is less hurried.

Next in importance to fielding comes the ability to find touch with either foot. I lay special emphasis on the need of finding touch. Length of kicking must be sacrificed to accuracy. There is no more depressing moment for a pack of forwards, than when one of the opposition fields, and returns to touch, a ball which has been kicked straight down the field by the full-back. Nothing is more aggravating to forwards, and nothing is more likely to tire them out so quickly. So my advice to all full-backs is to make certain of finding touch—far better is it to be sure of twenty-five yards than a probable fifty.

A full-back should be equally efficient with either foot. There are a number of full-backs, successful ones too, who use only one foot. They have been able to disguise the fact so skilfully that it has often escaped observation. From my own experience at half, where many opportunities of nursing forwards occur, I am convinced that much more ground would have been gained, and touch found with greater precision, if I had been able to use my right foot as effectively as the left. So in the case of the full-back, where similar opportunities occur and recur, kicking with either foot should be developed. Greater length can be obtained on the right touch-line by using the left foot, and greater length on the left touch-line by using the right foot. This point is often illustrated when a

full-back fields the ball near the touch-line. What is his first instinct? He runs towards the centre of the field before getting in his kick, and so creates a wider angle with the touch-line. It would be a very difficult matter for him, receiving the ball near the right touch-line, to get in a long kick with his right foot, whereas, running into the field of play, he naturally hooks the ball into touch, using the left foot with a greater degree of freedom. Cumberlege and Forsayth, who, on their day, were probably the longest kickers since the war, assure me that both feet are essential, and both can be developed and made equally useful by practice.

All full-backs must remember that with a following wind, the ball should be kicked well up into the air. Forsayth is the highest kicker I have ever seen. Down-wind, he gets an extraordinary length, and the velocity of descent of the ball is so great as to make it much more difficult to field and catch properly. A ball can be fielded in one of two ways, either in the cavity formed by the outstretched arms and the chest, or in the hands. The first is the safest method, and should always be used with a slippery ball on wet days, or for very high kicks. To kick to touch against a strong wind, Cumberlege exploited the drop-kick very successfully—a very useful hint for all full-backs. Against a head-wind I have seen Cumberlege kick a very long way, drop-kicking, using a low trajectory. More perfect timing is necessary, and the dropping of the ball on to the ground against the wind, with accuracy, is no easy matter.

Now we come to the all-important question of



tackling—the one part of a Rugby footballer's game which it is difficult to practise. Tackling other players in cold blood is not recommended. Tackling a dummy is an expedient which teaches you how to take off from the ground—but finishes there. A full-back should be a sound tackler. A very satisfied feeling exists in a team that can depend upon their full-back bringing down his man. Full-backs are often forgiven for not being able to reach a man, but once having got to him, a full-back, more than any other player on the field, will never be excused if his opponent slips through his grasp. Go hard—as hard as ever you can—when tackling, is the soundest advice that can be given to a full-back. The harder the tackle, the less likely the player is to run round the full-back again. Remember also the importance of a smother tackle. It is of great use in holding up an opponent near the line, when the ordinary low tackle would be of very little value, owing to the possibility of the player being tackled falling over the line with the ball. In this connection I should recommend every full-back to develop his muscles and physical stamina as much as possible. A smother tackle can only be accomplished successfully if the tackler has great physical strength. Strength is also required to stop a forward rush. A full-back who picks up the ball from forwards and literally fights his way through the opposing pack, gaining a valuable five yards, or a more valuable five seconds, during which time his forwards are given ample time to gather round and help in the defence, is worth a lot. But it can only be done if the full-back has abnormal physical strength. Do

not overdo it and hang on to the ball too long, as a free kick against you might be the legacy, for not playing the ball.

Accurate fielding by the full-back is made much easier by his ability to be in the right position at the right time. Certain players have this quality inherent in them. Some develop it by practice and experience. Others fail to grasp its importance, and are often seen tearing across the ground, or, worse, waiting for the ball to bounce. A full-back waits for the bounce, generally because he is unable to get under it; his speed over the ground is insufficient. The only way to eliminate the question of speed is to anticipate the movement and endeavour to get into the right place beforehand. Conversely, because it is not always possible to be in the exact spot, speed in a full-back is useful, even if it is only to prevent a ball bouncing. The feeling of insecurity which gradually, but surely, envelops a team possessing a full-back who lets the ball bounce, has a very adverse moral effect on the side. I would much rather play in front of a full-back who rushes at full speed, in the hope of fielding a difficult ball, than in front of one who waits for the bounce. In nine cases out of every ten, the ball, true to type, will bounce awkwardly, which precludes, generally, any chance of successfully gathering it.

To state definitely where a full-back should stand, how far behind the three-quarter line, and the exact position transversely, is an impossibility. His position must be adjusted according to the circumstances.

A full-back must realize that he must take part in

every movement, whether in attack or defence. In fact, there are few movements on the field where a back covers less ground than the remainder of the outsides. For this reason, he must be as fit as any other member of the side. Nothing fatigues a player so much as a short, sharp scrap, wrestling and struggling with opposition forwards. A full-back must be fit enough to do this, and, further, to dash off to catch the wing three-quarter.

The next important point which I ought to mention is the rôle which the full-back assumes, or endeavours to assume, in attack. A full-back should never lose a chance of opening out the game for his three-quarter line. It is a point often neglected, and it is due to one of two causes—lack of initiative in the full-back, or the failure of the three-quarters to realize the importance of getting into position to back up the movement. There are certain cases where a risk is incurred, but this risk is often small, if the three-quarters and the halves realize that the full-back is about to attack, and back up accordingly. Do not overdo the attack. Remember your primary function is defence. The old familiar adage that "Attack is the best form of defence" rarely applies to a full-back. A team must attack, but there are times when a team must also defend, and an attempt to attack would be fatal. How often has a full-back been tackled in trying to run when a kick to touch might have saved many yards of ground. A back can attack if he is certain that he has the backing of two or three other members of his side to carry on the movement. Otherwise he should kick to touch, and, generally

speaking, the sooner the ball goes into touch, the better for everybody concerned.

A full-back should co-operate with his three-quarter line in defence, and there should be no misunderstanding about the opponent to be tackled in certain cases—as, for example, when a fast wing three-quarter gets away with another colleague in close attendance. There is the possibility of the player with the ball running completely round the full-back, or, alternatively, cutting inside him. By studying the possibility of the case with his own wing or centre three-quarter, a full-back can ensure that, if the wing tries to cut in, he is shepherded into the wing three-quarter's hands, but at the same time, if he tries to run round, the back tackles him.

Make certain that you are alive to the possibilities and limitations of the short punt, when an opponent is attacking, and how useful you can be in frustrating that movement by intelligent anticipation of it.

Study all the tactical moves. A full-back is in a good position to see the game in a clear perspective, and can be a valuable help to his captain. I have received much sound advice on the football field from Cumberlege, the English full-back. Points have escaped my notice often, and Cumberlege has called my attention to them.

Finally, we come to a vital matter—the necessity of constant practice for a full-back. In no position on the field can one's play be improved more, by assiduous practice, than at full-back. If you can field a ball well, if you can kick a ball well, drop, place-kick, and punt, then you have some of the

essential qualities necessary for a first-class full-back.

All these things can be improved by practice. They are the main factors for a successful full-back. There are others. Practise running and passing, picking up the ball from the ground, falling on the ball in the right way. Take part in all the three-quarter passing movements. In no other position on the field is the training-ground more likely to produce better results. Finally, practise place-kicking. The full-back is the player best fitted to take the kicks. He has more time to think and more leisure for practising them. He is the kicker of the team in every sense of the word. Do not neglect the drop-kick. When attacking, a full-back is often in a favourable position to drop a goal. Chances come and do not often recur in this position, so be fully alive to the possibility of it. Four points, easily earned, may be invaluable.



## CHAPTER X

### TACKLING, PASSING, AND KICKING

The Side, the Front, and the Smother Tackle—A Defect which can be overcome—How to make the Perfect Pass—A Procedure not to be encouraged—Keep your Eye on the Ball!—Three Kinds of Kicking.

**T**ACKLING is an art which is usually acquired when young, although certain players become proficient after their schooling days are over. Any young player can learn, provided he conquers the instinctive dread of the idea, which is only natural at first. Yet the tackle, when properly executed, is not appreciably felt by the tackler.

I asked G. V. Stephenson, the Irish centre three-quarter, who with his brother and C. N. Lowe are three of the best tacklers playing Rugby football, the most important point to remember. "Go very hard," was his instant reply. Better advice could not be given.

The three types of tackle which the player usually meets with on the field are—(a) the side tackle, (b) the front tackle, and (c) the smother tackle. Of these, the first is the easiest. The main point, in executing a side tackle is to judge the distance carefully, before diving for the opponent's thighs. The impact is taken with the shoulder, and the arms

are wrapped tightly round the legs. The arms will generally slip down to the knees before a good grip is obtained. It is necessary to fall to the ground with the opponent, to ensure that the tackle is successful. Always aim through a man and not at him; the tackler's objective should be a point about a yard the other side of the opponent. The eyes must be kept open all the time. This is most important. The player who fails to realize it gropes his way through a labyrinth of trouble. Care must be taken, when making a side tackle, not to be handed off, and one must not get too close to the opponent before going low. Always be prepared to counter the head so as to avoid his hand and arm, as in boxing. It is advisable also to tackle with the head behind the opponent, i.e. if the man with the ball is running to the tackler's right, the shock is taken on the right shoulder. If the man with the ball falls, the tackler's head is on top and not underneath, and the chances of shock are minimized.

The front or direct tackle is the most difficult which a Rugby footballer has to bring off, and is the one which usually falls to the lot of a full-back—and less frequently to a centre three-quarter, who finds himself, almost stationary, confronted with a player bearing down on him at full speed. The tackler must not be caught standing still, and, to prevent this, he should move one way or the other, generally poised on the toes, ready to spring in the required direction. Much the same applies as for the previous tackle. Tackle low round the thighs, taking the shock as

before on the shoulder, and go to the ground with the man. There is little danger of the hand-off, but the tackler must be very wary of the player of big stature who runs with his knees well bent. The impact of an opponent's knees against the chin is a painful proceeding—a result quite likely to happen if the eyes are closed.

As to whether the tackler should look at his opponent's hands (ball), body and legs, or eyes, is a debatable question, and a point on which no consensus of opinion exists. When playing against Poulton, it was generally advisable to watch his legs, and not the upper part of his body, owing to the swaying movement of the latter, which disconcerted most tacklers. Some critics aver that the eyes should be watched, as in this way the direction of swerve can be more easily forecasted; but one thing is certain, that extra concentration of thought is necessary to bring it off effectively. The strategy should aim at forcing the opponent to one side or another, so that the movement approximates to a side tackle.

Often it happens that a full-back is confronted with an opponent bearing down on him at full speed with another player in attendance awaiting the final transfer. The advice most freely given in this case is to rush at the man with the ball, in the hope that he may be caught in possession. In any case, the chances of his final pass being a bad one are increased considerably.

The smother tackle, so effective near the line, so as to prevent an opponent dropping over with the ball in his arms, is also useful at the line-outs. As its name implies, man and ball are grasped together,

so that a pass is impossible. The tackle, which must be made high, is attended with a grave risk of the tackler being handed off, and it is only players of big stature and strength who ever attempt it, and even then circumstances must be extremely favourable.

Tackling cannot be practised on the training ground. It requires a large amount of courage to hurl yourself at a friendly player bearing down on you at full speed, and the results are not always worth the effort.

A dummy, consisting of a suspended sack and filled with straw, may be rigged up on which the players can practise. The circumstances are not realistic, but it is a device which teaches you how and when to take off from the ground before diving for an opponent. Even this is invaluable, and helps your tackling considerably.

Never despair of becoming a good tackler. It is a natural defect in most players, which surely, but gradually, can be overcome in time.

### THE PERFECT PASS

How many players are capable of giving a perfect pass? Even internationals fail in this most elementary part of the game. How often have we heard some one adversely criticized because he could not hold his passes? Have they always been given in the best possible manner? If a pass is given correctly, then it is generally the easiest thing in the world to take it, provided the receiver keeps his eyes on the ball, and not on the opponent about to tackle him. A pass should be delivered with both hands, and the propulsive effect is obtained by swinging the body

from the hips upward, and not merely by swinging the arms. The ball should be held securely in both hands, with the fingers comfortably outspread and pointing along the seams. The ball is not always received like this, so that a player's first instinct, after catching the ball, should be to get a comfortable grip, as explained above. The ball is held in outstretched arms, which should be its normal position, when running, in all methods of attack.

For a pass to one's neighbour on the right, the arms are swung well to the left, as far as possible consistent with comfort. The motion of the arms is comparable to the swing of a pendulum. The swing to the right is now completed, the ball leaving the hands approximately half-way between the centre and the maximum movement to the right. This ensures a good follow through, which is essential for a perfect pass. Extreme flexibility of the body is desirable, and it will be noticed that the muscles of the back and neck are all brought into play in propelling the ball to its destination. A good bodily swing is necessary for a long pass. It is generally advisable to swing the body even for the very short ones. Not only is greater accuracy obtained, but the bodily swinging motion facilitates the effective use of the dummy when this stratagem is required.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that both hands must be used for passing, so as to ensure an accurate delivery. Passes can be given with one hand, but the disadvantages are many. In the first place, the steadying and controlling influence provided by the second hand is lost. The use of one hand



precludes the possibility of exploiting the dummy to the fullest extent—in fact, almost puts it out of court. Football players are rarely ambidextrous, so that passing one way is difficult, and an improvised two-handed pass is used. I see no advantage in using one hand only, except, perhaps, a longer pass can be delivered. A scrum-half is occasionally forced into a one-handed throw. Several of Kershaw's passes from the scrum, the acme of perfection too, have been delivered by one hand.

Scrum-halves must cultivate the habit of throwing the ball out of touch with one hand—no easy matter to get the correct distance, height, and speed all at the same time. Yet all three are necessary if the team-work at the line-outs is good. I can think of no other occasion where a long one-handed pass is useful, except, perhaps, when a player picks up a ball in the loose with no one but the opposition near. It might be advantageous in this case in shifting the attack quickly to another part of the ground. These cases are rare, however. In every orthodox passing movement or run, both hands should be used.

As to the speed at which a pass should be delivered, opinions vary. I always liked to receive one as fast as possible, and so, perhaps naturally, gave mine accordingly. I think one can overdo speed. Certainly a swift pass is much harder to take, but the chances of interception are reduced considerably. A swift pass is imperative from the scrum to the stand-off half, and everything must be sacrificed for it. Speed is not such an essential quality from the half to the centre, and from the centre to the wing

the pass should be slowed down considerably; in fact, for a wing to take the ball going at full speed, so as to ensure no reduction in pace, while endeavouring to gather it, the pass should approximate to a lob.

The average person who is naturally right-handed will find it much more difficult to pass to the right. This is one of the reasons why I believe Lowe has been "starved" on many occasions. With a scrum near the left touch-line, the ball had to be passed along the line from scrum to stand-off via the centres to the wing three-quarter, four successful passes before it was received by Lowe, all in the unnatural direction. The chances that one will be dropped are great. If the pass is delivered by the perfect bodily swing, the straining effect on the arms and shoulder muscles is mitigated. If the arms only are used, it is natural that the average player who is right-handed cannot deliver a good pass to the left, because the natural propelling force to the right is the left arm, which has not the requisite strength. Swinging the body with the arms brings all the muscles of the back into operation, and distributes the strain.

Never pass through the legs. It is a risky procedure, and not one to encourage. I was severely rebuked by the Selection Committee in 1913, against France, for passing between my legs to Poulton. Luckily it was received, but it might have had disastrous results. Corbett's pass to Smallwood in the Welsh match in 1923, which enabled Smallwood to drop his goal to give England the lead and victory, was between his legs. It was not a good one, and was caught by Smallwood well above his head. However,

it was caught. England reaped the benefit of a hazardous policy.

There are two other kinds of passes which some halves in particular would be well advised to cultivate—(a) the scoop one-handed pass from the ground, and (b) the pass delivered in such a way that the giver falls full length after delivery. The first is a short one, and will only be used in cases of emergency—to save time, instead of going through two motions of picking the ball up and then passing. The second type is very often seen, and many scrum-halves invariably pass this way to their partner. The habit is not a good one to encourage, because it precludes the possibility of the scrum-half taking any further part in the movement which he has commenced, and this factor considerably outweighs the advantage of the increased speed of the pass and consequent earlier arrival of the ball in the stand-off's hands. However, there are times, territorially, when a scrum-half can take no further part in the movement, and it is then this type of pass is the most useful. Beginners have often said to me that it is impossible to give a long pass with both hands. This is a difficulty which can quite easily be mastered after a little practice. The point to remember is—give the ball “plenty of air.” Throw the ball up at an angle of about 45 degrees. The subsequent trajectory certainly makes the pass into a lob, but distance is gained. The angle can be reduced with practice. More effort is required, and the muscles of the back must be trained to ensure the requisite speed.

Passing can best be improved by running up and

down the field with a partner. It requires assiduous practice for perfection. Every member of the team should be made to stand round in a circle and pass both to the right and to the left. Enlarge the diameter of the circle so as to increase the distance. Increase the number of balls so as to speed up the movement considerably. Do not neglect, however, to run up and down the field in a passing movement. This is the real thing. Passing when running at full speed and when at rest are different movements. Under way, always deliver the ball at the right moment. Adjust your swing so that the pass to the right is delivered when the left leg is in front; then the natural swing of the body in running helps the movement. Above all, give a good swing, bring the arms well back, and always follow through. If after running the length of the field passing a ball, you are too fatigued to run back and decide to walk, always pass to each other in the recognized way. This develops a perfect swing.

To improve the accuracy of my passing, I often went down to the Services' ground and threw the ball at the goal-post, to hit it at a given height, approximately the height of a man's waist. I always endeavoured to pass in front of my imaginary partner, and not behind him. It is often possible to take a pass well in front of you. It is impossible to take one behind you.

### THE ART OF KICKING

Cumberlege, the well-known international full-back, told me that he would guarantee to teach any player,

who was not mentally deficient, the art of kicking a Rugby football in a fortnight. The first point to remember is, to keep your eye on the ball—a maxim to be instilled into the mind for every ball game. Never is it more necessary or essential than in the execution of a successful kick. Keep your eyes on the ball when you are holding it in your hand. Watch its path carefully, until it reaches your foot, and for beginners I can strongly recommend them to keep their eyes fixed on the kicking foot until the ball has left. Hold the ball lengthwise in the hand, with the lace upwards. It is then projected with no velocity practically, or allowed to fall. The Australians throw the ball at an appreciable speed on to the foot. I see no great advantage in this method, except, perhaps, on a very windy day. The usual method allows you to correct any adverse balance which might have crept in before the actual moment of impact of the foot and ball. The ball should be kicked with the instep, and not with the toe. Greater control is obtained, especially in wet weather, the risk of injury to the ankle is reduced to a minimum, and the length of the kick is considerably increased. Never strive for length in any kick. Accuracy in direction is the first essential. Length will come later. Never force your kicking. Increased length does not come by increased pressure from the boot, but by more perfect timing with the swing of the leg.

Three different kinds of kick must be cultivated before you can be classed as a kicker—the punt, the drop-kick, and the place-kick. The player should be able to execute the first two with either foot—but



this is not necessary for a place-kick. Perfect timing is essential for the execution of a drop-kick, where, of course, greater accuracy in direction is required. A drop-kick carried out during the game is difficult, as generally the player has no time to steady himself. Yet a certain adjustment is necessary for its successful accomplishment.

For a deliberate drop at goal you must choose your position carefully. As an example, I kicked naturally much better, with greater length and accuracy, with my left foot. If I was in our opponents' "25," with a scrum about ten yards from the right touch-line, I invariably stood the same distance away from the scrum, nearer the centre of the field, and prepared to drop at goal. Many points militated against the success of the movement. The pass from Kershaw had not to be too swift. Standing ten yards away about ensured this. The direction of the pass had to be such that I ran across the ground instead of straight. I had little speed on, which increased the chance of an accurate kick.

Practise dropping with both feet. Do not specialize with one foot. A drop-goal is an expedient. You ought rarely, if ever, to manœuvre into position to drop a goal. Your position ought to lend itself to the movement—when it is the only policy to adopt. Having found yourself in this unique spot, then steady yourself and adjust your stance. Time is such an important factor on these occasions that to manœuvre for an ideal position or stance is sometimes—often—out of the question. Hence the necessity of being able to drop with either foot. I could have

increased the score in many games, important ones too, if I had been able to use my right foot with any degree of certainty. Chances came and recurred, but I was unable to accept them. I refrained from trying ever with my right foot, because there is nothing more annoying to your team than to see the stand-off half aimlessly drop at goal.

When you are practising drop-kicking, endeavour to practise as well the manœuvre leading up to the kick. If picking up a ball from the ground, commence running at full speed, stop, and then drop as you are steadying yourself. Alternatively, when catching a ball, drop-kick at once for goal, after making your catch, or again immediately after picking up the ball from the ground. The chances of taking a deliberate aim for a drop-goal—the penalty drop-goal, of course, being excluded—are rare.

The punt is a much easier manœuvre to execute, because you have more time to adjust yourself for any initial inaccuracies in swinging your leg or dropping the ball. To be a successful kicker, especially in defence, you must practise the art of punting when running. The old familiar adage, "Keep your eye on the ball," is more than ever necessary in this case, where so many distractions might engage your attention—opponents rushing at you, the thought of being tackled, or how to avoid the would-be tackler. Do not be put off by any of these. Keep your eye fixed on the ball, and get in your kick. There is no more delightful feeling than to get up, after being bowled over, to find that your kick has gained thirty yards for your side, and probably saved an ugly situa-





(TOP) A PLACE-KICK  
 (BOTTOM) IMMEDIATELY AFTER IMPACT  
 (CENTRE) THE RESULT

tion. Do not neglect the art of screw-kicking. It can be practised, and by constant effort one becomes a past master. Run towards the corner flag, and endeavour to get a kick into touch in the opposite direction to which you are going—an invaluable manœuvre in defence.

Among all the first-class players of to-day and of the past, none has neglected the art of kicking—nor can one afford to in these days of high specialization.

The only other kick which I want to discuss is the place-kick at goal, the success of which depends upon two individuals—the player taking the kick and the player who places the ball on the ground.

For a successful kick, the ball must be correctly placed. For complete success, when practising place-kicking you should practise with the player placing the ball. It is a joint execution. The timing becomes more exact, as the kicker knows exactly when the ball is down, and the risk of the kick being charged down is reduced to the barest minimum. Never have the results of constant practice been more amply justified than in the England and Scotland match of 1923, when England defeated Scotland by 8 points to 6.

The results of the English place-kicking in the matches against Ireland and Wales had been so disastrous, and the kicking so deplorable, that the Selection Committee had serious intentions of including Day as centre three-quarter for his place-kicking alone. It was unfortunate for Day, but, as it turned out, equally fortunate for England, that in the Navy *v.* Army match his place-kicking was not a success. His play in the other phases of a centre three-quarter's



game did not justify his inclusion, so the Selection Committee were confronted with the same difficulty. It was decided to try Luddington instead of Conway for the execution of any place-kicks against Scotland, and instructions were duly given to him to practise during the fortnight previous to the match. In a letter to E. W. Roberts, S. F. Cooper, the old international, who was running the Devonport Services' team at the time, just before the match, wishing the team success, confirmed the fact that Luddington had practised assiduously every night, but added that he considered it was most important for Gardner (Luddington's club-mate) to place the ball, and not Kershaw, as was our usual custom. The result was commensurate with the effort. Luddington, with Gardner placing the ball, kicked a magnificent goal to Voyce's try, which gave England the lead—8 points to 6—a lead which we maintained to the end, and so won the match.

Another instance of good place-kicking was Day's wonderful exhibition in the England and France match in 1922 at Twickenham, when England scored two penalty goals and a goal, all kicked by Day from long distances, to effect a draw, a draw, moreover, which retained the Twickenham record intact. A remarkable feature about the place-kicking, which makes the circumstances quite unique in the history of Rugby football, was that it was done with Pitman's boots. Day's bag—those of us who know Day well, appreciate the fact—was taken away inadvertently from the Great Central Hotel, where the English team was staying, about two minutes before the

char-à-banc was due to leave for Twickenham. Luckily Pitman's gear (Pitman was reserve wing three-quarter) fitted Day, with great success, and, as things turned out, a catastrophic circumstance was averted.

Good place-kicking retained the Twickenham record, but inaccurate place-kicking was partly responsible for our only defeat on the national ground by the South Africans. England failed to drive home the advantage, both moral and actual, of a successful place-kick—an easy one too—a try under the posts at the beginning of the game, while South Africa kicked two penalty goals from the half-way near the touch-line, for petty infringements in the English scrummage. England scored a try under the posts in the first ten minutes. Wodehouse took the kick, and, to everybody's consternation, missed. It is one of the few incidents I remember in the game, and it has indelibly impressed itself on my mind.

In place-kicking, make sure that your hole in the ground is properly fashioned, so that a cradle is made for the ball—a point which is often overlooked. Statistics, of course, are not available, but I should imagine that more than 50 per cent. of the unsuccessful kicks at goal are due to inaccuracies in placing the ball on the ground—inaccuracies either due to the imperfect making of the hole, or to the player placing the ball not quite in its correct position. The ball should be upright for short-distance kicks, with the lace away from the kicker. If you are sufficiently powerful and strong in the legs, the ball may be similarly placed for long-distance kicks, but for the average player it will generally be necessary

to incline the ball at an angle so that the point of impact of the toe is at the pointed end, lace upwards again. Keeping your eye on the ball, and following through with your leg, with the knee bent, are two maxims which should be borne in mind when taking the kick. Never look at the goal-posts while running up to the ball or during the kick. To make your hole in the ground, dig your heel in and revolve round two or three times, and then mould it to the desired shape with your hand. Accuracy in detail is often fully rewarded.

Kicking has assumed much greater importance, since it was decided that a player, after making a mark, must take the kick himself, and it behoves all players to perfect themselves in this part of the game.

## CHAPTER XI

### TACTICS, POSITION GOOD AND BAD

Deductions from Statistics—Importance of the Drop-goal—Bold Tactics often pay—A Formation difficult to maintain—Folly of not varying the Tactics—"Mix it up"—A Grave Error in Navy *v.* Air Force Match—The Necessity for "Backing up"—A 1920 Ruse.

TO dogmatize on tactics on the Rugby field is a difficult problem. The lapse of one individual in defence, or the brilliance of another in attack, opens up a wide vista of possibilities which will render null and void many pre-conceived ideas. All teams must go on to the field prepared to carry out some plan of campaign, depending on the requirements of the day, after the merits and demerits of the opposition have been discussed and the climatic and other conditions have been taken into account, but at the same time they must be fully alive to the importance of changing their tactics, consequent on the varying strength and weakness of the opposition—causes which probably have not been realized sufficiently beforehand. The final success of a game often depends on the ability of a team to alter their plans of attack and defence at the right moment.

Before endeavouring to consider in detail the tactics to be employed on different occasions, it is

interesting to analyse the points which have been scored in international matches between the several countries, and to show how these have been obtained.

Points, as my readers are aware, can be scored by tries, penalty goals, dropped goals, and the value of a try increased by kicking a goal.

To study the importance of kicking as a factor in the success of a side, it is necessary to get a comprehensive view of the effect of the place, drop, and penalty kicks. In the table on the opposite page I have endeavoured to tabulate, as accurately as I am able, the number of tries scored, goals kicked from the tries, penalty goals, and dropped goals kicked, by the five countries.

Analysing the statistics given, it will be seen that less than 50 per cent. of the number of tries are converted, the highest percentage being that of Scotland, who have converted 116 out of a total of 249, or 47 per cent. Ireland comes last, having converted only 54 out of a total of 143, or 38 per cent. Wales, England, and France are practically equal with 43 per cent., 41 per cent., and 40 per cent. respectively.

Data are not available to show how many matches have been lost by place-kicking alone. Only three important games are recalled to my memory in this respect. The England and Scotland match at Inverleith in 1923 was won for England by a successful place-kick at goal. England saved the match with France at Twickenham in 1922, when Day placed two penalty goals and a goal from a try. South Africa defeated England at Twickenham, the only



# TACTICS, POSITION GOOD AND BAD 163

defeat on the national enclosure, by two penalty goals, each side scoring in addition a try.

	England.	Scotland.	Ireland.	Wales.	France.	Total.
England:						
T. . . . .	—	67	101	89	64	321
G. . . . .	—	29	30	41	32	132
P.G. . . . .	—	1	6	1	5	13
D.G. . . . .	—	1	4	3	3	11
Scotland:						
T. . . . .	55	—	101	66	27	249
G. . . . .	28	—	49	24	15	116
P.G. . . . .	1	—	4	7	1	13
D.G. . . . .	7	—	2	3	1	13
Ireland:						
T. . . . .	42	33	—	38	30	143
G. . . . .	15	11	—	13	15	54
P.G. . . . .	5	3	—	3	2	13
D.G. . . . .	4	2	—	3	2	11
Wales:						
T. . . . .	79	59	74	—	57	269
G. . . . .	33	22	31	—	31	117
P.G. . . . .	6	4	6	—	5	21
D.G. . . . .	5	9	5	—	0	19
France:						
T. . . . .	13	8	20	11	—	52
G. . . . .	6	2	7	6	—	21
P.G. . . . .	4	0	0	2	—	6
D.G. . . . .	0	0	0	2	—	2

But whether more matches could have been won or not is unimportant compared with the fact that

about 60 per cent. of our place-kicks at goal, from tries, have been failures—a lamentable state of affairs, and one which ought to be remedied. The easiest remedial measure is, of course, constant practice. Nothing lends itself to improvement more than place-kicking.

The moral effect on the side in knowing that it possesses a place-kicker of more than average capacity is tremendous. It is a well-known fact that the chances of Day's inclusion in the 1923 English side for his place-kicking alone were only jeopardized by his exceedingly poor form in the other phases of centre three-quarter play.

After analysing statistics of penalty goals, no definite conclusions can be reached, as, of course, the number of kicks taken or tried have not been recorded, and the percentage of failures or successes cannot be given, but it is interesting to note the number of penalty goals scored against the respective sides, which can be taken as a measure of their *brutalité*.

Scotland has had 8 penalty goals only scored against her, whereas Ireland and England have had 16 each, and Wales 13. The only mitigating circumstances which we can plead for England and Ireland is that Wales and Scotland, being better kickers, made fuller use of the opportunities presented them.

The most interesting feature about these statistics is that, in the case of drop-kicking, Wales easily lead the field with 19, Scotland come next with 13, while England and Ireland have 11 each only.

Wales have scored nearly twice as many dropped goals as have England in international matches.

As with penalty goals, the records of the numbers of attempts have not been kept, so the percentage of failures cannot be given. The exact tactical importance on the game cannot be estimated, as all the circumstances of the drop at goal must be taken into account when assessing its value. But, all these things considered, I am sure that England does not yet realize the value of the drop-goal—the importance of seeing when an opening presents itself, the moral uplifting of one's own side when it comes off, and the corresponding moral degradation in the case of the opposition. A drop-goal has always appealed to me, because of its tactical importance.

In my first season at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, I received a peremptory, but very polite, message from the Commander saying that if I tried to drop a goal again I should lose my place in the team. My proneness to attempt it vanished at once. I tried again eighteen months later, after the Commander left the college. As I have said before, there are times, attacking in your opponents' "25," against a strong defensive opposition, when no other method is likely to produce a score. I make this statement quite reservedly, and will qualify it by saying that the person attempting it must have a natural aptitude, or show more than the average ability to do it. To enlarge upon the exact time and place for this manœuvre to be carried out is almost impossible, but I am certain that the chance occurs to every outside player at some time, when a drop-goal is the right tactics to employ. I will go further than this and say that it is the only one to carry

out on many occasions. Chances come and recur to the wing three-quarter just as much as to the stand-off half, to the scrum-half just as much as to the centre three-quarter, and to the full-back probably more than anybody. A good full-back, when his team are pressing on their opponents' goal-line, will lie close up, in the hope of catching an ill-directed kick, and then will drop a goal. What other tactics is he to employ? He dare not commence a round of passing, as the three-quarters are not in position to back him up. It would be wasting valuable ground to kick to touch. Moreover, when you are attacking near your opponents' line, touch is the last place where the ball ought to go. Kicking the ball into touch gives your opponents time to pull themselves together and to take a valuable "breather." There is nothing else to be done except to drop-kick. After all, it is only giving the back an opportunity of putting into practice the art in which he should be more accomplished than anybody else. Do not overdo the drop-kicking. Although it demoralizes the opposition when it comes off, it has an equally demoralizing and aggravating effect on your own side, if tried with repeated non-success. There is nothing more annoying to a team than to see a stand-off half or scrum-half, or any other player, aimlessly dropping at goal. My advice to all players is, to practise it assiduously. It should be used sparingly, as the opportunities present themselves only infrequently, and even if you have a natural aptitude for dropping goals, do not let the desire to do it get too strong a hold on you. It is an individual effort.

As will be seen, by far the greater number of points are scored from tries. No information is available, but there can be no doubt that the majority of tries are scored by the outsides. The percentage of tries scored by the forwards is steadily increasing, however, due to the more open play of the modern game, and to the rapid development of the fast breaking forwards in present-day football.

The general tactics of a team in attack is to score a try, and the orthodox method is for the ball to be heeled, and passed along the three-quarter line for the wing three-quarter to score. Speaking again without any details of the statistics available, it is fairly certain that the majority of tries are scored by the wing three-quarter, who is generally going "all out" when he receives the ball. A player with full way on is infinitely more difficult to stop than any other.

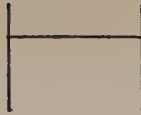
Many teams have gone on the field obsessed with the idea that the ball should not be heeled in their own "25." A wing three-quarter generally should have plenty of room to manœuvre in. He is given more room if the attack is commenced in his own "25," rather than near the opponents' goal-line. Moreover, the opposition least expect an attack then. In fact, they are lined up for attack themselves, and not for defence. When attacking near the opponents' goal-line, your chances of success diminish, because the concentration of the opposition is proportionately increased. Attacking from your own "25," their defence is less concentrated, but there is the risk that the attack may break down at any moment. Being near your goal-line, one of the opponents might pick



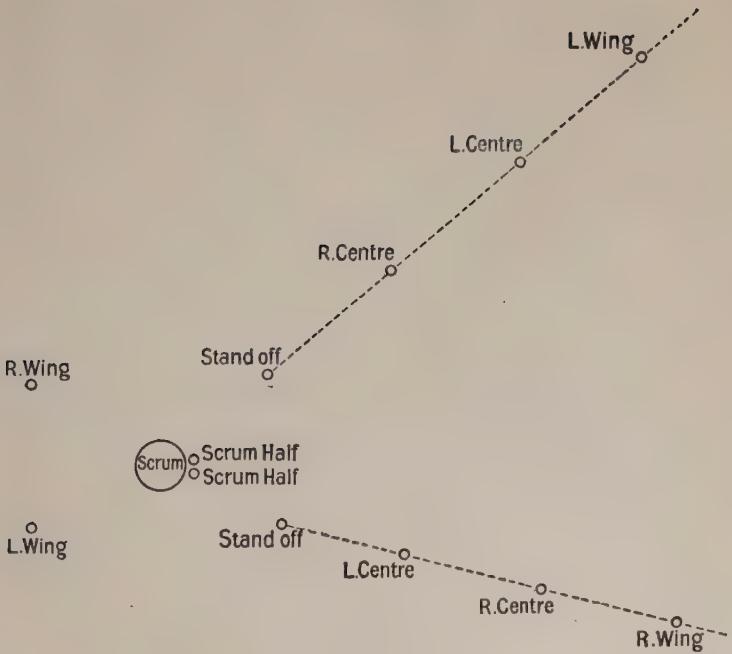
up the ball and dash through your defence. This risk must be taken.

I am a great believer in bold tactics on the Rugby field—play as daringly as the circumstances permit. Commence a round of passing on your own goal-line, if the opportunity presents itself. Scrumming on your own line, or within five yards of it, there is the risk of an interception by the halves or fast breaking forwards, which is sometimes not justified. In this case the forwards should keep the ball, which may sometimes be heeled with discretion, for one of the halves to get a kick into touch. A counter-attack at an unexpected moment is a team's most valuable weapon.

I have mentioned before the importance of being right up for attack and back for defence. There is no half-way house, and the three-quarter line should be in one straight line, as in fig., instead of spread-eagled, which is often the case. This is an important point, so important, in fact, that I invariably asked one of the centres to make certain throughout the game that the three-quarters and stand-off half kept in one straight line. The advantages of the formation are obvious. Each player is in the correct position to receive a pass. The movement, starting from rest at the base of the scrum, gradually gains in velocity, until, when the wing three-quarter receives the ball, he is travelling at full speed, which makes him a difficult person to tackle. Another great advantage is that you invariably know where to find your partner. He is always in the same relative position—an important point when a hurried pass



## ATTACK



has to be given. Again, in defence, the straight-line formation precludes any chance of a break through, and ensures that every man goes for his opposite number. If the players are not in a straight line, the chance of an opponent drawing two men, or, alternatively, running through the gap between the two, due to hesitation on the part of either in not knowing who is to tackle the man with the ball, is increased. It is not an easy thing to keep in one straight line. Brains act at different speeds. One player sees an opening more quickly, or realizes that he must get up to his opponent before his partner. He starts sooner and endeavours to anticipate the attacking movement of his opponents by getting closer to them. If this must be done, the whole of the three-quarter line should move with him. Do not think it is an easy matter to do ; it is not, especially in an international side, with probably four three-quarters from different clubs. It is the most difficult thing in the world to get the three-quarters in a straight-line formation and keep them there throughout the game.

For a scrum in the centre (transversely) of the field, it would be better generally for the right and left centres and wings to stand on opposite sides of it. This gives the stand-off half a chance of developing an attack on either side. If the attack is delivered to the left, then the right centre should endeavour to come up and take part in the movement, generally by being in position to receive the reverse pass from the stand-off half or centre. If the heeling is slow, it might be possible to get up

to the left of the stand-off half and take part in the direct passing movement from the scrum. This is more easily accomplished, if you know the stand-off half's intentions before the ball is heeled.

In the case of a scrum near the touch-line, it will generally be advisable for the wing three-quarter to stand on the blind side, to frustrate any movement in that quarter. If the scrum is too near the touch-line, and there is little chance of a successful blind-side movement being accomplished, then the wing three-quarter should come on to the open side and take up his position next the stand-off half.

I have often been asked whether Kershaw and I had any special tactics in working the blind side of the field. My answer is—No. We very rarely, as a pair, worked that side. Kershaw sometimes worked it in conjunction with the wing three-quarter. I ran to the open side to await an inside or reverse pass. Generally speaking, working the blind side of a scrum as a pair, and with your own wing three-quarter, cramps the movement too much.

In the case of a wing three-quarter of exceptional speed, it will sometimes be advisable to get the ball out to him quickly. His speed is usually wasted if the pass is long delayed and he is given the ball too near the touch-line. He has very little room to work in, and his attacking powers are considerably curtailed. Scotland failed to realize this in the 1923 game against England at Inverleith. Liddell received the ball in the loose once about 10 yards from the touch-line. Unmarked, he was off in a flash, and it was only a brilliant tackle by Holliday which saved

the situation. Possessing a very fast wing, Scotland would have been well advised to try to pass out of the scrum to Liddell, without a moment's hesitation. This would have given him time and space wherein to manœuvre. Scotland, however, never employed these tactics, with the result that his exceptional speed was wasted. Of course, any policy of playing up to Liddell must not be too obvious, and should not be done often. What I desire to point out is that it was never attempted. Outside the scrum, it was generally agreed that England possessed the more experienced set of backs, who were fully alive to the ordinary exigencies of a Rugger game. No amount of skill or brains will catch a man who is yards faster than anyone else, provided he is given a reasonable chance. Liddell was given one such chance. We were shaken to the foundations. The opening did not recur, and no harm was done.

I will give an illustration from the same match on another important point—the folly of not varying tactics during the game. Discussing the probable chances of our side with G. V. Stephenson, the Irish centre, just prior to the game at Inverleith, he told me that the Scottish outsides often short-punted in the hope that Liddell would gather the ball on the bounce. The English team were forewarned about this. The manœuvre was tried and repeated by Scotland until it almost became an obsession. No harm could possibly be done under these circumstances. We always expected it, and laid our plans accordingly.

Generally, of course, play up to your strength,



but only in moderation. The opposition realize your strength, and will concentrate on it, so there will be more chance of a mediocre member of your team scoring. Never work a willing horse to death on the football field. Good players generally require nursing just as much as anybody else.

A team, individually and collectively, should never be afraid to change its tactics. If your wing three-quarters are unable to score, then endeavour to break through in the centre. If the centre is tackled the first time, let him try again. Remember that a player who endeavours to break through, requires at least one, and possibly two opponents, to watch him. In the case of a stand-off half, if your three-quarters are ineffective, try to go through on your own. Try once, twice, or even three times consecutively. Even if you are not successful, the defence of the opposition is drawn more securely round you, and others are less closely marked, so that when the ball is again passed out, a better chance exists of doing something with it. The same remarks apply to the scrum-half. If he is a mere automaton in attack, who feeds his partner regularly, he is of little use to his side. The opposition is easily concentrated on the pulse of the movement, the stand-off half. No, endeavour to break away from the scrum on your own. Try a dummy, or other subterfuge. In general phraseology, mix it up a bit, remembering always that the unexpected has more chance of success than the ordinary, orthodox passing movement.

Never is a change of tactics more likely to be productive of success than by the forwards. Two games

come vividly to my mind where a change of tactics might have produced better results and staved off defeat. The first was the England *v.* Scotland match of 1922 at Twickenham, when Scotland looked for sixty minutes of the game to be easy winners. The forwards were on top, heeling the ball with clock-like regularity to the backs. The backs passed well, but were prone to run across the field. They failed to score, except one try in the first half. The second half was a repetition of the first. The ball was passed with the same frequency as in the first half, but nothing happened. Passes were fumbled, or else the three-quarters ran aimlessly across the field or kicked to touch. The English forwards were beaten; the Scottish pack could, with ease, have kept it, wheeled or shoved straight through, in fact, made it a forward game, whenever they chose. Luckily for England, this was not realized. In the last quarter of an hour the Scottish pack tired, and we commenced to heel the ball. Although beaten forward for the first sixty minutes, our scrum never became disorganized. The Scottish pack tired, as all packs will, who carry out a regular policy of heeling to backs, that do nothing with the ball. In the last ten minutes, we heeled the ball, and won easily. The Scottish pack, who had the situation entirely in their grasp, lost their advantage through failure to realize how and when to change their tactics. Yes, mix it up. If you are not scoring tries, something is generally wrong. Try other tactics and strategy.

Another classical match which many of the experts consider was lost by bad tactics, was the 'Varsity

match of 1921, when Oxford won, although beaten for nine-tenths of the game forward by the Cambridge pack. Cambridge, holding a great superiority forward, heeled the ball regularly throughout the match. Their three-quarters could do nothing with it. The Oxford forwards, although beaten in every phase of a forward's game, broke away quickly from the scrum and helped the defence. Oxford won, but many good critics state that if the Cambridge forwards had wheeled the scrum or carried the ball with them, a very different result would have been recorded.

Do not be afraid to change your tactics, if things are not going well, or even if it is just stalemate. I committed a grave error in the 1923 Navy *v.* Air Force match in not changing my tactics sooner. It was a very wet day, foggy, and all against good outside play. During the first half the Navy forwards held the R.A.F. pack and heeled the ball a little more frequently. We could not do much with it, except for one or two spasmodic attempts to drop at goal, which just failed. The R.A.F. scored a try by a forward rush, and led by three points at the interval. I was very loath to change our tactics even in the second half, as I considered we possessed more chance of scoring outside the scrum. But it was not to be. Our pack deteriorated, and in the last ten minutes were hopelessly beaten, which rendered any chance of scoring rare. Seeing the game in its clear perspective now, I ought to have changed my tactics in the last quarter of an hour of the first half, and let the forwards try their hand. What I failed to

realize was—although it was forcibly brought home in the 1922 England *v.* Scotland match—that forwards, although they possess a distinct superiority over the opposing pack, will lose that superiority, and their degradation becomes unusually rapid, if the backs fail to do anything with the ball. Never delay too long, otherwise, as I have explained, your forwards might be cooked, and the best leader in the world will never pull them together. I can commend this practical case to all captains of teams outside the scrum. Do not overestimate your own powers outside, as I did that day. Give your forwards their chance. If they are a good pack on a wet day, they will generally grasp the opportunity and revel in it.

The next important question is: What are the forwards to do when outsides are attacking? Generally speaking, the best thing the pack can do is to run down the centre of the field in anticipation of a kick or a reverse pass inwards from the wing, either of the centres, or the stand-off half. No finer combined movement is ever seen on a football field than a round of passing along the three-quarter line, a burst by the wing three-quarter, and finally a kick across which is fielded by one of the forwards, who gallops over with a try. This is Rugby at its best, and a fitting climax that one of the players who was mainly instrumental in heeling the ball should score the final try. In running down the centre of the field, be careful to keep on side. Do not, in your eagerness, anticipate the movement too much. Remember that the stand-off half or centre three-quarter may kick across, and

not the wing three-quarter. In this case, if you are over-anxious, you will be off-side. Always lie behind the ball, and keep yourself well in check, so that you are capable of effecting a good burst of speed at the critical moment.

In defence, as I have explained before, the main instinct is to get across diagonally to the corner flag, to help in stopping a centre cutting through or a wing cutting in. If you are fast and anticipate the movement well, you may be able to tackle the wing three-quarter who has run round the full-back. The odds are against you, however, if the run has been properly executed.

A point very often overlooked by outsiders is the importance of "getting up" quickly, when your forwards are executing a wheel. You are in a far better position to help them if their dribble has been temporarily checked. Again, you are in the right position to carry on a passing movement if the ball is heeled from the loose scrum. Remember, and this is important, that many more tries are scored from loose heels, i.e. heels when a forward dribbling movement has been checked, than from the orthodox scrum formation. The secret of success, however, depends on speed and the ability of the forwards to realize the exact moment to heel. If you are checked temporarily in a forward dribble, do not try to hack your way ahead for another 2 or 3 yards. It gives the opposition time to gather round. Immediately you are checked, heel and get it out to your three-quarters, and the quicker the heel, the greater the chance of scoring a try. Hence the necessity of the



halves and the three-quarter line following up a good forward dribble.

Another point in tactics which is often overlooked by the three-quarter line is when the full-back fields the ball. Always drop back, not individually, but as a line. Failure to do so may have serious consequences. In the first instance, the full-back may be tackled, and you are in a hopeless position to help him unless you fall back. Secondly, you are in a much better position to combine with him if he decides to initiate an attack. I remember discussing this important question very fully with Cumberlege. He stated that he always liked to see the three-quarters falling back when he was fielding the ball. It gave him more moral support.

In a combined team movement, too much emphasis cannot be laid on the importance, in fact, the dire necessity, of backing up. All successful team movements owe their success in the first instance to the fact that some one is at hand to carry on the good work started by another member of the side. Remember that while the ball is on the field of play, every player is taking a definite part in every movement, whether he touches the ball or not. How often do we see a brilliant individual try scored by a player, only made possible and stamped with the hall-mark of brilliance because two or three others have been backing him up. Yes, the more I think of it, the more I am convinced of the fact that all successful movements on a Rugby field, and all individual successes, are due to the capacity to back up.

A point often overlooked by a team attacking is the importance of keeping the ball in play. Save it from going into touch by every means in your power. If it goes into touch, you give the opposition sufficient time to collect their forces and put their house in order. Moreover, the mental tension is relaxed, which is a great relief to them. If the ball is kept in play, the mental strain remains—they get no respite, and the chances of your attack being successful are increased.

Another point of great importance is—when a scrum is ordered near the opponents' goal-line, consequent on a petty infringement, the scrum should be formed as soon as possible, remembering that every second lost gives the opposition a greater chance of pulling themselves together.

The ultimate end of all tactics in Rugby football was summed up very cogently by J. E. Raphael when he said: "If you can feign to deliver an attack in one direction, and then deliver it in another, your chance of success is increased." These are sound words—but very difficult to bring into action. A ruse which Kershaw and I exploited successfully against Ireland in 1920 explains Raphael's principle clearly. I dashed away to one side of the scrum, drawing Cullen and my old friend Dicky Lloyd. Kershaw threw the ball to Smallwood on the other side. Smallwood promptly transferred to Lowe, who scored a ridiculously easy try. It was easy to feign an attack in the 1920 season. It is getting more difficult nowadays.

## CHAPTER XII

### TRAINING AND PRACTICE

Types of Staleness—Moderation Essential—Sharp Running and a Studied Diet—When to Avoid Training—Where faults are Eradicated—Practice Hints on Passing—Shoving and Dribbling and Team Movements—The Player's Kit.

**P**ERHAPS the most important factor in the Rugby footballer's career is training. Systematized training is necessary to develop the lungs and muscles of the body, to allow them to withstand the rigours of eighty minutes' strenuous exercise on the field. Rugby football is not a game for a player who neglects this elementary precaution. To get the maximum enjoyment, a player must be physically fit. Otherwise he may suffer bodily harm by trying to play. Complementary with training is practice, and both should be arranged together as far as possible, remembering that whereas assiduous practice might eventually lead to perfection, assiduous training, unless carried out properly, will lead to nothing but staleness.

Staleness is the rock on which most athletic ships founder. There are two types of staleness which a Rugby footballer should endeavour to avoid—mental and physical. It is very difficult—almost impossible—to differentiate between them. Both must be

avoided. If the brain is stale, the muscles will not respond readily, and there is a definite lag between them. Everything tends to become mechanical, and there is no snap in the player's movements. All training, therefore, should be arranged, if possible, to avoid staleness. Naturally, it is more likely to occur at the end of the season. Several cases can be cited where players have been stale at the beginning, due to the excessive training and practice which is necessary to get the wind and limbs fit.

A Rugby footballer is generally a silent worshipper at some other shrine of athleticism, and it is probable that during the summer he plays cricket or tennis. Even at the commencement of the football season, he is fairly fit, consequent on gentle exercise and an open-air life. Rugby commences and the embryonic international footballer, full of enthusiasm and love of the game, goes into serious training. He wanders up to the ground every night, trains assiduously, lessens his smoking—in fact, one might imagine he was training for the 'Varsity Boat Race. My advice to these enthusiasts, young and old—I have been guilty of it myself—is to remember that the season is a long one. You will require just as much energy at the end of the season as at the beginning. The human body will not stand the continued strain of intensive exercise throughout the winter months. Moderation in everything is a very good example to set yourself. Moderation in training for Rugby football is essential if you would withstand the strain of a hard season—to play just as well against France on Easter Monday on a hard ground in Paris with a temperature more

suitable to cricket than Rugby football, as in the international trial on the first Saturday in December, or for your club on the first Saturday of the season. Do not get fit too early. It is far better to be under-trained than overtrained always, and especially is this so at the commencement.

It was the invariable practice at the United Services' ground at Portsmouth to put up the Rugby football posts about a fortnight before our first match, and it was no uncommon sight to find fifty players kicking about in the evenings. Systematic training was commenced immediately, as this added considerably to the keenness and enthusiasm of everybody.

For the first few days everything was subordinated to getting one's wind right, and, whether a forward or outside, a few long-distance runs two or three times round the field each evening was found beneficial. At the beginning, perfection in kicking, passing, and the other finer points of the game were sacrificed to getting fit in wind and limb, yet by a judicious combination both were worked in together. When you are fit, it will take very little training to keep you thus, and my experience in the past has been that once during the week, or twice at the most, some sharp running practice combined with a studied diet will keep you as fit as you want to be.

Sharp running practice is best carried out as follows. Walk half the length of the field, run full speed the other half, walk again quickly, then full speed, and so on alternately twelve times (six runs). This I found the best way of keeping my wind right as an outside, and, I believe, is the best method for a



forward. I never attempted long-distance running. Several forwards advocate it to get, and even keep, their wind sound; but I am a firm believer that for any Rugby player, forward or outside, having once got fit, the best way of keeping so is by short, sharp sprints with alternate walks in between as above described. Twenty minutes' exercise at the most each evening, provided, of course, every minute is fully occupied, is ample; in fact, if you are exercising all the time, it is probably too much.

Do not overdo it. Always come off the ground feeling that you want to go back. Never get tired. This is fatal. How often have I seen players—I have done it myself—come into the dressing-room with little energy left. It is the commonest and greatest mistake which all athletes, especially Rugby footballers, make. Undue and over-exertion produces fatigue in the muscles, which is fatal for the extra bit of ginger required during the course of the game.

To carry out a rigid training, as I have suggested, two evenings each week, will, even to the most ardent enthusiast, soon become monotonous, and it will not be long before the monotony produces staleness, so any variation in the form of exercise is strongly recommended. We were peculiarly fortunate at the Services' ground to have squash courts, and most of the players varied their method of training by playing squash. Half an hour on the squash court twice a week is ample for anybody, as no game takes away so much energy, if properly played.

Skipping, of course, is an old and useful form of exercise, which can be carried out in a limited space,

and which can be made as intensive as the player desires.

I am a strong believer in running occasionally in running shoes ; it quickens your movements considerably and enables you to get off the mark quickly. Practising starts also formed a strong plank in my training programme, and short, sharp races with the wing three-quarters always brought out the maximum effort in every one. I am not an advocate of any rigid forms of diet, even before an international or other important match. Invariably during the Rugby season I avoided excessive amounts of starchy food, rich cakes, and sweets. For a trained athlete they have an adverse effect on the wind, so they should be avoided. But generally a rigid form of diet is rarely necessary, and the usual normal methods and habits can be followed with few exceptions.

Another point which is often overlooked is the importance of avoiding training if you are not in perfect health. Players must realize that if the system is lowered, undue fatigue is the last thing that will put it right. Never train unless in good health, is an axiom which all athletes should follow.

I have little more to say about training, and after careful filtration of the facts, I am certain that the two most vital points to remember are—the necessity of variation to avoid staleness, and the importance of being just undertrained and not overtrained.

The game is getting faster every year, and no place can or will be found for the unfit player. It is an exacting age, and the seriousness of Rugby football is strikingly shown in the bodily fitness required to

play it. This can only be attained by training. It often requires a large amount of courage, and a certain imperviousness to the biting satirical remarks of your friends—generally those who do not realize fully what makes life worth while—to rush up and down the football field, sometimes in the dark hours, rain or fine, very often alone, in football shorts. Rugby footballers do it, and generally do it, moreover, at the end of a hard day's work—so that they are physically fit enough to withstand eighty minutes' strenuous exercise on the field of play.

What do they get out of it? Nothing but the pleasure of playing Rugby football, and the probable enjoyment of the fruits of victory. Success is always satisfying, but the pleasure, profound as it may be, is small compared with the unalloyed satisfaction in playing the game.

Rugby footballers, unlike most other athletes, are not the slaves of a favourite cricket-bat, lawn-tennis racket, or golf-club. A Rugby player's only implement is his body; but, even so, there is a tendency to place a great trust in the body, and a proneness to blame the body if things go wrong. Fitness is the only panacea for this evil—fitness in mind and body. The fit player must be very careful, however, not to make the body the master. At Rugby football above all other games, the body is the servant, and the mind the master.

Complementary with training is practice. To dogmatize on the best method or to lay down hard-and-fast rules for every individual is impossible, and the only governing principle to remember is the impor-

tance of realizing that defects must be overcome gradually, while at the same time the natural capacities are given ample scope for development. Generally speaking, conditions of employment and hours of duty, etc., preclude the possibility of most players practising with a ball during the week. If one plays regularly twice a week, as many men do, in county and club matches, etc., no other form of training or practice is necessary; in fact, it is very undesirable, otherwise staleness will soon set in. It is much better to go on the field on a Saturday afternoon anxious to grasp a Rugby football. Do all players get this feeling? Very few, I am afraid, understand the full import of it.

Does every player realize the importance of overcoming his natural defects, and that the training ground is the place where his faults can be eradicated. All faults, or mostly all, can be corrected by constant practice, yet very few players arrange their training systematically to overcome these defects. The player is exceptional who has not suffered, and does not suffer daily, the pangs of having to break off the chosen line of activity in order to cope with irksome necessities in other directions.

I will quote myself as a very bad example in this respect. Kicking came very naturally to me with my left foot. I was not half so proficient with my right. In fact, for an international player, I was rank bad. Unfortunately, I took very little trouble to improve this. I was never weary of practising with my left foot, but to practise with my right was anathema to me. For my short-sighted policy

I have paid dearly. Chances came and recurred of using my right foot, but I was unable to accept them. Another example of players refusing to overcome their natural defects—and internationals are no exceptions—is the ability to pass from left to right. This is not a natural swing for a right-handed person, and many find great difficulty in passing this way accurately. Players will avoid passing this way, even when practising. I have seen them at the United Services' ground deliberately shifting sides, when running up and down the field, so as to avoid passing from left to right.

To become proficient you must practise, and practise assiduously, certain things. Drop-kicking and punting, place-kicking, can all be improved by practising. In arranging your practices, do not kick in an aimless manner. Always have some objective in view. Endeavour to find touch from all angles of the ground. Practise your kicking with either foot—place, drop-kicking, and punting. Get into competition with one of the other players and endeavour to beat him in the length and accuracy of his kick. Practise picking up the ball from the ground, when it is at rest and when in motion, and try to do something with it afterwards, such as a quick pass to an imaginary member of your side or a screw-kick into touch. Endeavour to make your practice as near the real thing as possible. Have you noticed how much more difficult it is to catch a ball, if you are conscious of the fact that you must get rid of it at the first opportunity, or if you are aware that fast-breaking forwards are rushing at you? After fielding a high kick, always go through



the motions of an immediate pass to one of your side, or side-step to avoid oncoming forwards. To catch a ball is easy. To catch a ball with the knowledge that something must be instantly done with it afterwards is no easy matter. In your practices always endeavour to carry out some preconceived movement, imaginary or otherwise.

Do not be content with practising picking up a ball from the ground. When you have picked it up, get away as quickly as you can. Have you ever noticed this characteristic of A. L. Gracie? Not only does Gracie gather a ball well off the ground, but he regains a normal running position and gets into his stride at once—a valuable asset to cultivate. Alternatively, practise gathering the ball at full speed off the ground, a sudden check and dummy, and then stampede off in the opposite direction.

Half-backs should practise together always. Practise getting the ball away from the scrum, varying the length of passing. Practise running the length of the field within two yards of each other, and see how many times you can inter-pass during the run. Practise short-punting and following up together, throwing in from touch. In fact, always practise with your partner; one gets to know him so much better, and a proper knowledge of each other's play can only be gleaned by intimate relationship. I was never tired of practising with Kershaw, and I can thoroughly commend a similar procedure to all other half-backs, to the centre and wing three-quarters of any team, who must have so much in common, and generally to all players.

For forwards scrum practices are essential. The Services are peculiarly fortunate in this respect. Having all their players centralized, it is easy to get two packs together. Scrum practices are carried out twice a week, and generally last twenty minutes. Invariably, it is found that interest wanes considerably after about two months. Fictitious excuses are put up, but there is no doubt that a certain lack of enthusiasm and the monotony of the proceedings are beginning to be felt. It is necessary to commence scrum practice at the beginning of the season, so as to get your pack together. Having once got them together, a month's rest is desirable, and then start again.

At the first two scrum practices the forwards are drilled in pure solid shoving. Nothing else is attempted. All forwards should be kept at this until it becomes second nature to them. Shoving is a good forward's most essential characteristic, and no forward should ever lose an opportunity of increasing his power to push in the scrum. Next in order of importance is dribbling, and every endeavour should be made to perfect this.

Certain team movements, positions, and formations are always carried out by the Services during practice. As an example, scrums are formed and the three-quarters lined up for attack. The ball is heeled and passed along the three-quarter line to the wing, who runs and then kicks across to the forwards following up. This manœuvre is often practised. Not only does it give the outsides passing practice, but is invaluable to encourage the forwards to break

quickly from the scrum, and teaches them the importance of instant backing-up, and exactly what their capabilities are as regards speed, anticipation, etc., in getting to the appointed place at the right moment. The manœuvre is varied by either of the centres kicking across. This variation is necessary, because it is found that the forwards more often than not are off-side for the greater part of the movement, as their first instinct on breaking is to run down the centre of the field, to get ahead of the ball. The manœuvre gives the forwards excellent practice in fielding a cross-kick. It surprised me to see what a large percentage of players, even in a first-class side, try to avoid catching a ball on these occasions. They are quite content to leave it to their next-door neighbour. If the cross-kick is not accurate and the ball bounces, it is no uncommon sight to see two or three forwards going for it at the same time. The bounce extracts all the difficulty and every forward is eager to get to it!

The forward to take the ball, whether it is caught before it bounces or after, is the one coming up at full speed, and not the forward who has to check his way and take the ball almost standing still. How often do we hear a forward shout "Mine" when he gets to the position underneath the ball, stops to receive it, and then recommences again. Not only has the momentum of the whole movement been checked, but the chances of the other forwards being off-side and in a bad position to back up are considerably increased when re-starting.

Forwards should practise dribbling as a pack,

checking themselves from a loose rush, and then heeling back to the three-quarters. It is from such movements that the majority of tries are scored on a Rugby field, and the first thing a pack of forwards should realize is, the moment a loose rush is checked, to heel the ball immediately. Formations at the line-out and kick-off should be tried, and every forward given his appointed place in the field at the line-out and the opponents' kicking-off.

Although not germane to my subject, yet the player's outfit is almost of equal importance. The most important item of your kit is the football boot, and every player must realize the necessity of being well shod. Just as the boot is the most important item of one's outfit, so are the studs the most important item of the boot, and no player should ever go on to the field unless his studs are in good condition. The form of stud is limited by regulation, so there is little use in elaborating on this point. Personally, I always kept three pairs of boots in very efficient order—one for practising, and two for use in matches—which were invariably well studded and carefully looked after.

A set of studs never lasted me more than one or two months, and I never thought re-studding an extravagance.

Although not of the same importance as boots, shorts, jerseys, and stockings should be considered. How often do we see players stop during the middle of the game to tie up their stockings with a piece of string, when an ordinary elastic garter would have been far more suitable and saved much time.

Shorts should have plenty of room in the seat, so as not to restrict the movement of kicking and bending—an important point and one often overlooked. Many players use very tight-fitting shorts, which cramp their movements considerably, and materially decrease their speed. All buckles or other projecting fastenings should be avoided. Comfort in attire on the football field is everything. I invariably carried a complete spare outfit to a match, because I never felt happy in other people's gear, which rarely fitted me. Oft-times one sees in a match a player with a torn jersey which is extraordinarily uncomfortable and occupies a great deal of the player's time and attention in hitching up some fraying end. Stop the game immediately and get a new shirt. Do not endure the inconvenience of any torn clothing for a minute. It is not worth it. It is so easy to get a spare. Nobody minds waiting; in fact, the rest of the team will probably be delighted to have a breather.

Too much stress cannot be laid upon the cleanliness of a team. It is pleasing to see fifteen players, correctly and cleanly attired, arriving on the field. The moral effect is greater. A Saturday afternoon at the Richmond Baths will convince you that all teams are not immaculate in their dress. In fact, a personal acquaintance with the players is often necessary before recognition of the team is possible.

I have often tried to study the moral effect of training and practice on the individual, and how it affects his play. Many times I have gone down to the ground to train when I have been fit, simply



because I thought it was the thing to do, as this little extra training convinced me, if any conviction was necessary, that I was fit, and gave me a certain confidence on the day of the match. During the last two years I began to doubt the wisdom of my policy. Personally, I think the moral effect of being fit is almost nil. You are inclined to get into a self-satisfied state of mind, which reduces considerably the snap in your movements, so necessary on the field of play.

## CHAPTER XIII

### POST- AND PRE-WAR RUGBY

England most consistent Country since 1920—Strength of the Opposition?—Ronald Poulton's Standard of Centre Three-quarter Play—Changed Conditions of Forward Play.

RUGBY enthusiasts are never tired of discussing the relative merits of post- and pre-war Rugby football, and one is often asked whether the England team of 1921, which scored 61 points against 9 in the international matches, and their line only crossed once, was as good as the pre-war team of 1914.

The standard of play in 1921, after a lapse of seven years, during which time many had few opportunities of playing Rugby football and keeping fit, was not as good as in 1914. It was a great feat to beat Wales at Twickenham by the large margin of 18 points to 3, and to outclass her at every phase of the game. The good opinion formed of the team was confirmed in the defeat of Ireland by a large margin, with fourteen men and a re-organized side a few minutes after play began, owing to an injury to the stand-off half. Scotland were beaten decisively at Inverleith, and France in Paris, although the margin in our favour in the latter case was only two goals to two penalty goals. The

1914 team could not show a record equal to this. But was the standard of the opposition the same? It is certainly true that England made a quicker recovery on the Rugby field than any of the other countries—France, of course, excepted. In the first year after the war, England, Scotland, and Wales were bracketed equal at the head of the championship. The following year, the period under discussion, England were champions. In 1922, after a debacle in the mud at Cardiff, England finished strongly, and was a good second to Wales. In 1923, she again proved victorious, beating all the other countries in turn, so that her form since the war has been the most consistent. Wales has suffered considerably from the ravages of the Northern Union and certain domestic troubles. Scottish players suffered most from the effects of the war, and are only just building up a fifteen, which will one day prove a worthy successor to the great teams of the past. When the Rugby game is written up in Ireland, historians will marvel that a team should ever have been produced during the last four years. Even if the English team was up to pre-war standard, the strength of the opposition was not. France, of course, is the exception, and it is to France that I will turn for my argument to show that the standard of play is not quite the same yet as in pre-war days. Since the war, France has been one of our most formidable competitors at Rugby, and is every day advancing in the knowledge of the game. Pre-war, except for a solitary victory over Scotland in 1911, France was generally beaten, and very decisively too, by the

other countries. Yet, since then, France has defeated Ireland and Scotland, drawn with England at Twickenham, and run Wales very close at Cardiff. Unless the standard of French play has considerably improved, the only other logical conclusion to be drawn is that the form of the other countries has deteriorated. Probably a compromise between these two lines of thought will be nearer the exact truth. Yet it is difficult to understand why the standard of French play should have improved very much during the time no first-class Rugby was played. It appears, however much we dislike it, that our play must have deteriorated. Granted even this, the ardent enthusiast retorts—but surely now, in 1923, football is up to pre-war level. Well, one must remember that it is easier to undermine existing institutions than to build up new ones, and I doubt if we shall find that the standard of Rugby football is up to the pre-war high-water mark in the excellence of its play during the next two or three years.

An argument which is often advanced in favour of the 1913-14 side is the dearth of first-class centres since the war. Is this a fair comparison to make? Are we not judging our standard of centre three-quarter play by the standard of one individual, viz., Ronald Poulton? Was Poulton's standard of play a fair datum-line from which to measure the excellence of others? We found just as much difficulty in the season 1913-14 to find a satisfactory partner to Poulton as we have found in post-war days to lay our hands on a pair of centres who can be said, with any degree of confidence, to fill the bill. At the beginning of

1913, F. M. Stoop was tried against the South Africans. He made way for Steinthal, who made way for Tarr, who was replaced by Dingle, and it was not until J. H. D. Watson arrived that a solution was reached, and even he was not sufficiently tried in international football, as a lapse in the French match showed, to convince every one that the problem was solved. Poultons are difficult to replace, and no centre three-quarter of the present day has ever approximated to his brilliance. But the Selection Committee of 1920 were confronted with an even greater task than in 1914. Krige, who played with Hammett against Wales, was dropped in favour of Smallwood against France; Myers was introduced against Ireland; Corbett, Bradby, and Locke have also been tried with varying success. For the last three seasons Myers has been our sheet-anchor in the centre three-quarter position. Sound always, brilliant at times, as in 1922 against Scotland at Twickenham, when he made one of the straightest runs ever seen in an international match, Myers has served his country well. So we see that although there has been an inconsistency of form at centre three-quarter, it was no worse than in pre-war days.

Another factor which makes it difficult to compare post- and pre-war football is the changing conditions of forward play. The faster and more open type of game now played by modern forwards masks individualism outside, and makes the ordinary cut through more difficult of execution. Of course, one might have lost the art of cutting through, which certainly is not easily acquired by practice, or be



lacking in just that extra bit of speed, or speed off the mark, necessary to carry out the manoeuvre successfully. Forwards as a pack are faster to-day than they were in 1914, and the character of their game is changing. You will retort and say—nobody in 1921 broke as fast as Charles Pillman. No, probably not. Pillman was an exception, and Pillmans only turn up infrequently; but nowadays three forwards comprising the back rank break away from the scrum quickly, and the sooner they are freed, the faster the second and front rank are able to disengage themselves, with the result that the whole pack is alive almost as quickly as the ball is heeled. This phase of modern forward play affects the individualistic outside, and also accounts for the larger number of tries scored by forwards in present-day football.

Another point on which exact information is required before a definite conclusion can be drawn, is the relative merits of the different players at the two periods. Wherever footballers congregate, there one sees the rebirth of the process by which each Rugby decade judges the great players of the present age, and compares them with the players of the past. We have heard that John Daniell was the prince of captains and leader of forwards, Munro and Stoop the best pair of halves, Vassall was the best centre, and Gamlin the best full-back, and then we try to compare them with players of the present decade—Wodehouse, Wakefield, Brown, Greenwood, Kershaw, Poulton, Johnson. We may be able to reach easily a perfectly accurate and unbiased estimate of any one particular player's worth, but to judge the relative

merits of players even in the same positions at different decades is bound to defeat us. The passing of time, which sometimes alleviates our trouble, only serves in this instance to intensify and accentuate our difficulties. Even men with whom we have played before and after the war are difficult to categorize. Was Wodehouse a better leader or a better forward than Brown, Greenwood, or Wakefield, Pillman more use to his side than Voyce, or Johnson a better full-back than Cumberlege? It is difficult to answer these simple questions with a plain "Yes" or "No," and I should not hesitate to pay my tribute of esteem to any who can.

## CHAPTER XIV

### WHAT OF THE FUTURE ?

Preserving the Balance of Power—A Wrong Principle—Is there too much Kicking ?—Petty Infringements—" Loose Head " and Harlequin Proposals—Method of Scoring—Standard of Refereeing.

**I**N attempting to solve the various points which confront us during a game, one is often brought face to face with the problem of its future development. The presence of fast-breaking forwards has speeded up Rugby football tremendously, and subdued to a certain extent the individualism of outsides. What is going to happen if the forwards of the future are all of the same speed as Wakefield ? Of course, players of Wakefield's type only occur at infrequent intervals, and even then a player with his gifts and speed would not always choose to push in the scrum, but would probably play where he was intended to play—in the three-quarter line. Abnormalities are bound to change conditions. It requires, however, a vivid imagination to see what, exactly, is going to happen if eight forwards of Wakefield's speed and stamina form the modern pack.

To maintain the three-quarter line in its present

rôle as the main attacking unit of the team, the speed of the three-quarter must be increased, or, alternatively, the number of the forwards decreased.

It is unfortunate that boundaries exist in our physical structure beyond which extra speed cannot be obtained. All teams will, therefore, be forced to adopt the formation now practised by Leicester and Bath, of playing seven forwards and eight outsiders—to try to preserve the balance of power. Otherwise, I see little in the formation of eight outsiders to recommend its universal adoption. The disadvantages of overcrowding caused by the extra man and the loss of shove in the scrum render its use and advantages very problematical in ordinary circumstances. On several occasions, to assist in defence, an extra man is pulled out of the scrum. Personally, I am not a great believer in this policy. It is quite unnecessary if the back-rank forwards break quickly.

To pull out of the scrum a forward who is quite unaccustomed to outside environment almost defeats the object set out to be achieved. Bath and Leicester have made a speciality of this formation and brought it to a high state of perfection by assiduous practice. But, examining the thing from first principles, and realizing that the foundations of successful Rugby are laid in the scrum, and any weakening of this foundation should be deprecated, I say, with all due deference to the success achieved by Bath and Leicester, too great a strain is thrown on the seven forwards. If seven forwards can hold the opposing eight, then the extra man in attack and defence outside the scrum is invaluable—more valuable, I think, in defence than

in attack. Any theory which subordinates attack for defence is wrong in principle, and ought to be discouraged. In attack, I must say, it has few advantages, which are neutralized by the overcrowding caused by the extra member.

Another development of the game which is tending to alter its character, if we may judge by the criticisms levelled at us by old players, is the strategical importance or non-importance of kicking. Many old players and celebrities of their time have written deprecating the large amount of kicking which is going on in present-day football. Kicking, of course, in defence is necessary. In attack, I am inclined to agree with the old school, that kicking is overdone, but I will qualify this remark by adding that kicking is overdone because much of it is aimless and ill-directed. The strategical importance of kicking remains, and must not be overlooked. It has vast possibilities, even in attack. The value of the cross-kick from the wing is, of course, well known. Short punting is also invaluable in attack. It is a very difficult manœuvre to execute properly, and its difficulty accentuates the number of failures, but this is all the more reason why it should be practised, and not condemned. The exuberance of fast kicking forwards will only be curtailed by strategic kicking, not to touch, but to develop the attack in other quarters. As I have said before, kicking in attack is a difficult manœuvre, difficult to execute and difficult to see the exact result of any error which might have been made in its execution. Difficulties exist to be overcome, and I think more tactical kicking will have to be indulged in, in the



near future, for the sole purpose of countering fast forwards. Nothing breaks a forward's heart in defence as much as good kicking to touch, and I am convinced that nothing will tend to stop the forwards developing too much on the lines of outsides as judicious kicking in attack. Opposing forwards must not be allowed to get among the backs. They should be confined to their own work, and the only way to do this is to run them off their legs. A forward cannot do a three-quarter's work and his own work in the scrum without great exhaustion. Nothing will hasten on this fatigue as much as good strategical kicking.

Is the game slow or tedious ? The answer to both questions is in the negative, and I do not think any legislation is required to make it any faster. To improve its attraction as a game, and not as a spectacle, is the legitimate and correct aim of any governing body, but I think all that is needed to make it more attractive as a game and as a spectacle is a wider interpretation of the rules by referees, and a greater degree of accuracy by players. One case occurs to my mind at once, the knock-on at the line-outs. At least 70 per cent. of the line-outs end in a scrum being formed at the 10 yards' line for a petty infringement. Virtually, two attempts have to be made to get the game recommenced after the ball has gone into touch. On several occasions I have seen no reason whatever for stopping the game at the line-out ; in fact, often a knock-back has been given as a knock-on by the opposing side and penalized as such. So when a knock-on has occurred (it might even have been a knock-back), it goes straight to the half, who opens out the game to

find a scrum ordered. Such cases as I have referred to are aggravating to the player and spectator, and in many cases the petty infringements could be ignored altogether. The referee will immediately ask—Where is the limit to be? Unless a rigid interpretation of the rule is made, much abuse is liable to creep in. There is a certain amount of justification in the latter remark. Abuse of the rules of the game, once tolerated, is not easily arrested. At the same time, I cannot help feeling that a little wider interpretation of the laws of the game, after due consideration of the spirit in which both teams are playing, would be a distinct advantage. Control the obstruction at the line-outs by all means. In fact, put down with a ruthless hand such practices as shoving in the back, intentional knocking-on, etc., but let the minor infringements go. A more open type of game, which will tire the players much less, will result.

In view of the more open type of forward play now in existence, it is interesting to recall the new rule of a season or two ago, which defined a scrummage as consisting of two players of opposite sides, and gave the referee power to penalize a half who did not put the ball in immediately the scrum was formed. This rule was adopted for the sole purpose of speeding up the game by avoiding unnecessarily long scrummages. Its effect has been negligible for the purpose for which it was framed. Rarely have I seen a referee exercise his prerogative in this direction. More often than not the referee retards the half by insisting on the scrum being straight before the ball is put in—a necessary factor. I am afraid the effect of this legislation

has been infinitesimal, and its influence in speeding up the game nil.

A contentious subject on which a great deal of discussion has taken place is the question of "loose head," or the advantage of the outer head position in the scrum. That the outer head position is an advantage is non-debatable, and the question before us is how to abolish the struggle between the forwards to gain this advantage.

The tactics employed on occasion to obtain the loose head are innumerable. Some, I regret to say, border on obstruction, and can be definitely classed as such. Others, generally, are contrary to the spirit and intention of the game, and have created so much ill-feeling, which should not be tolerated. That the time is ripe for stricter legislation no one doubts, as the existing rules are not wholly adequate to deal with the many forms of obstruction to gain the loose head. Loose head can always be penalized as obstruction, but clubs are so skilful in their use of it, and practise the art so assiduously, that it can only in some cases be classed as obstruction by straining the interpretation of the latter word ; such practice is against the spirit and letter of the game.

The situation is further complicated by the methods of dealing with it in various parts of the country by the different referees. Some referees find it so difficult to control, that the matter is ignored altogether—not without disastrous consequences, for many games can be best described under these circumstances as "dog-fights" forward. Certain referees, having no fixed legislation to guide them, attempt certain conventions,

which, so far from solving the problems, only accentuate the anger of the players.

That the outer head position is a distinct advantage is clear to all, as the hooker on that side sees the ball first. The laws of our game as once constituted did not recognize this as an advantage, which it undoubtedly is. A resolution to the Rugby Union recently proposed by the Harlequins was based on the very sound principle that where an advantage exists in restarting the game, it should go to the side not responsible for the stoppage—the bed-rock on which the laws for all ball games must be constituted, and which was recognized by the Rugby Union in the revision of rules governing the throw-in from touch.

The following new rules were proposed by the Harlequins: (*a*) In all cases where the referee orders a scrummage, or where a side exercises its right to claim a scrummage, the referee shall award the right of putting the ball into the scrummage to the side which is not responsible for the stoppage of the game. In case of doubt, the referee shall award such right to the side which is territorially on the defensive. (*b*) In all cases where a scrummage is ordered, or when one side exercises its right to claim a scrummage, not more than three players on each side shall form the front row of their forwards before the ball is put into the scrummage.

The objects of the suggested alterations are quite manifest. They put an end to loose-head tactics, and they endeavour to carry the "advantage rule" to its logical conclusion. A side adopting and continuously fighting for the loose head is bound to alien-



ate the sympathy of the referee sooner or later, and legislation should be framed to guard against this. So long as the rules stand as at present, when a referee has the power to decide on which side the ball is to be put into the scrummage, so long will there be a contest between the two sides to obtain the outside head on the side on which they expect the ball to be put in. I am a strong antagonist of the referee's power in this matter, and I am a firm believer that a scrum-half should be able to put the ball in whichever side of the scrum he desires. An arbitrary enforcement by the referee to put the ball in on a certain side cramps the style of the half-back considerably, and does not always allow you to open up the game in the direction productive of the best results. Kershaw and I found this a very great handicap on occasions, as a direct pass in the direction in which a stand-off wanted to go was much more quickly delivered than a reverse pass.

There is no doubt that the rules of the Harlequins are a complete panacea for the evil. They did not get general support from all clubs, not even from those who never practised or approved of loose head, because of the fear that the rules would complicate and thus spoil the game. I do not think this fear is justified when the rules are clearly digested, and no interference with the game as played by teams not practising the loose head, results. A certain onus of responsibility rests on the referee in awarding the ball to the scrum-half, but this is small, and interferes very little with his other duties. The referee still retains full discretion in awarding or withholding



penalties in cases of infringement. Laying down more clearly what is permissible and what is not facilitates the task of the referee and clarifies the atmosphere for the players by standardizing practice on this important point, which varies greatly, generally to the disadvantage of the visiting teams. If the Harlequin ideas had been adopted, the death of loose head would have been in the hands of the referee. Both proposals were not adopted, but the second one was. No embargo is laid on a lesser number than three, which is the usual formation in all football, nor on the completion of that row to any number, after the ball has been put into the scrummage. As far as it goes, the legislation adopted has been of immense value, and the loose-head tactics, if not entirely stopped, have been arrested. I am afraid it is too optimistic to hope that its gradual disappearance should be only a matter of time. The centre man will still fight for the outside position, but having once formed down, nothing can change the outside head. Personally, I think it is a pity the Rugby Union did not accept both rules, and so make a complete job of the whole affair.

Some critics have advocated a change in the method of scoring, maintaining that the drop-goal at a value of four points is out of all proportion to its achievement. There is much sense in the argument put forward for a reduction, but I am not sure that I would support it unreservedly. It has been pointed out that a drop-goal is an expedient when a try appears improbable. Other people argue that it is solely an individualistic effort, and not the result of team combination. All these arguments are real, but is their

cumulative strength sufficient to justify its abolition or modification? In the first place, it is a sound rule to provide an alternative method of scoring points other than by tries, neglecting all scores from infringements by penalty kicks. If the opposition is strong enough in defensive powers to prevent a team scoring tries, then they should be strong enough to prevent any individual getting into position to drop a goal. I was instructed, as a young international player, to get up to Dicky Lloyd quickly, to prevent him dropping at goal. It was not an easy manœuvre to frustrate, with such a past master against you, but you had the great satisfaction of knowing that his difficulty was greatly increased by your unwelcome attentions. The other strong objection to it—individuality—may be advanced against every combined movement on the field. It is the hall-mark of individuality which makes any movement successful. One individual has beaten his opposite number, otherwise every movement would be checkmated. Moreover, it is not an easy individual manœuvre on every occasion—only on rare occasions, due to the lapse of the opposition, who deserve to be penalized by its success. No, a successful drop-kick is generally worth the four points allocated to it, and I cannot recall an occasion where the result has been incommensurate with the effort.

Another proposed change which has not met with universal approval is that for the players at the line-outs to stand at least five yards away from the touch-line. Standing close up, as at present, there is a tendency to cramp the openness of the game, so it is averred. On the other hand, I have seen the game

opened up very quickly by many short line manœuvres between the scrum-half and one of the forwards, and I am not sure that leaving a gap of five yards will decrease the number of stoppages. Legislation to reduce unfair tactics is justifiable; other legislation should be adopted only after much deliberation and thought.

There is just one other point in the future development of the game which I should like to refer to, and that is the importance of an adequate supply of good referees. At a Rugby football dinner which I attended in London, Potter Irwin, in a speech, impressed upon all players the importance of taking up refereeing when their playing days were over. In an able speech which impressed its hearers very much at the time, Potter stated very cogently it was a debt that all old players owed to the game in return for the hours of enjoyment which they got out of it. Moreover, as he pointed out, the future success of the game demanded it. What person is better qualified to sit in judgment on thirty players than one who has played the game before them? Rugby football is making such rapid progress, and no stone should be left unturned by the governing body to ensure that the best referees are obtained and a constant supply of good referees maintained. How often have we heard in the past that the game was spoilt by too much whistle, or that the referee appeared to be the most important man on the field?

That refereeing is not universally of a good standard, and in some cases is rank bad, is a generally accepted fact. The reason is not far to seek. How many of the referees of the present day do we recognize as old

players of the game? I can count good referees on the fingers of my hand, and they have been players of note in the past. Of course, there are exceptions, but very few. I have often read about weird decisions given by referees, or of a referee's biased judgment, which made it impossible for one team to win—generally the visiting team. I have accepted these statements with a certain amount of reserve, and generally concluded it has been the result of post-prandial oratory, but unfortunately in my last season I discovered two of the very worst type, one of whom actually reversed his decision at the threat of a player. The other was so obviously biased as to render our chances of winning almost negligible. It was farcical at times to hear the whistle blow, just as the ball was emerging from the scrum to set up an attack. We gave him an awful fright in the last ten minutes when we dropped two goals and were only just beaten by a point. The final whistle went three minutes before time, so that our chance of success was rendered void.

It is difficult to understand the temperament of such referees. It is more difficult to understand the mentality of officials who allow such referees to control a game. Club officials, however, cannot always be choosers. Owing to the paucity of good referees, difficulty is often experienced in getting the right stuff. The referee has the greatest power of any of the thirty-one actors in the drama, but the most successful referee is the one who uses this power in the most unobtrusive way, who subordinates his own interests to the spirit of the game. It is very necessary that the game should be refereed in the spirit in which it is played.



I remember, in my last match of the 1923 season, playing against a Welsh fifteen at Devonport for the local Services side, and at the dinner in the evening I mentioned to Uzzell, who was captaining the Welsh fifteen, that it was the best refereed game I had ever played in in the West Country. He agreed, but made one criticism—that the referee was not wholly with the spirit of the game. Uzzell's criticism, although probably harsh, reflected the ideal spirit. No one could have objected to any of the referee's decisions. They were given without fear of person and without a vestige of bias towards either side. And yet at the back of one's mind one was conscious of the fact that he would have been more at home refereeing a Newport *v.* Cardiff match or a pre-war Harlequin *v.* Blackheath match than the game under consideration. This is an important point often lost sight of by referees—the necessity of entering into the spirit of the game, of subordinating one's own importance to that of the players.

The question of refereeing is a crucial one. A certain society which is limited in its scope does exist at present, and without making any reflections on the persons who are responsible for its working, for every one will agree they are doing great work, I am of the opinion that the Rugby Union as a body should give the matter far greater consideration.

The London Society of Referees are doing much for the good of the game, and have always taken themselves seriously, but a wider interpretation of their powers must be aimed at, and they must not think first of themselves, and secondly of the objects



for which they are supposed to exist. The order should be reversed. The London Society is of very limited scope. A governing body is required of sufficient stature to look over everybody's shoulders, and its main duty should be to raise the standard of refereeing, to obtain recruits from all quarters as representative of the playing community, and to ensure that those recruits pass a comprehensive and satisfactory test.

## CHAPTER XV

### VITAL HISTORICAL FACTS \*

Abolition of Hacking—First International—Revolutionizing Outside Play—Northern Union Split—Colonial Rivalry—Rugby's War Record.

**I**T was in 1823, at Rugby School, that William Webb Ellis first ran carrying the ball when playing, and so inaugurated the distinctive feature of the Rugby game. It was not, however, legalized even at Rugby School until the season 1841-2, and then with certain restrictions, the most important of which were that the ball should be caught on the bound, and there should be no handing on, but the catcher must carry the ball in and touch down himself. Fundamentally, therefore, we may date the game of Rugby from 1841, although, of course, running with the ball had existed in Great Britain and Ireland for centuries, under different conditions.

From the information we can glean, there is no doubt that players of olden days enjoyed the game just as much as those in modern times. Extracts from certain records show that it exercised the same

\* The author is indebted for much of the information in this chapter to "The Rugby Game and How to Play It," edited by C. J. B. Marriott.

compelling attraction on the populace as it does to-day, and the following from Major Moor's *East Anglia*, published in 1823, is interesting:—

It is a noble and manly sport. The eagerness and emulation excited in the competitors and townsmen is surprising. Indeed, it is very animating to see twenty or thirty youths stripped to their skin and displaying the various energies that the game admits of.

In the old days of 1841, the game was played by over 100 players. Naturally, with such a crowd there was a large amount of scrummaging. Very few matches ended with any definite results, as in that time no match could be won unless a goal was kicked. Hacking was a distinctive feature of the game, both in the scrumage and with a player on the run. Indeed, without hacking, it is doubtful if the ball would ever have been freed.

The rudiments of the game were disseminated chiefly by masters and old Rugbeians; and Albert Pell, afterwards M.P. for Leicestershire, introduced the game at Cambridge, where a few years later, in 1848, a meeting was held to codify the varying rules which existed. Another famous nursery of the game which deserves to be chronicled was the Blackheath Proprietary School, by whom was founded the Old Blackheathens' Club in 1858. The club appears to have been opened to all members in 1862, and this distinctive feature has been a marked characteristic throughout its history.

In 1863, a meeting was held at Cambridge of the representatives of the leading Public Schools, and a code known as the Cambridge Rules, embodying features of both kinds of football, was drawn up. The

same year a similar meeting was held in London, at which it was decided to adopt these Rules. Only four Rugby clubs were represented at the meeting. At the next meeting a definite line of demarcation between the two codes was drawn. Blackheath and the other clubs voted in favour of the retention of hacking, but were out-voted from the newly formed body.

In 1866 hacking was abolished, and on November 17 of that year a letter from the Richmond Club, which was formed in 1863, advocated the abolition of hacking, and subsequently, in the same year, Blackheath and Richmond declined to play any clubs who adhered to that feature of the game. The players now numbered only fifteen to twenty a-side, so that the necessity for hacking was almost done away with. Before this it was very necessary, for, with sixty or seventy players on each side, without it the ball never saw the light of day, being lost in a sea of legs.

In 1869 the Oxford University Rugby Football Club was formed, and it is interesting to note that several other clubs first came into existence during the six years between 1863 and 1869—Manchester, Liverpool, Harlequins, Wasps, etc.

On January 26, 1871, the Rugby Union was formed. The variations in the rules played by different clubs largely militated against the enjoyment of the games, and the matter was brought to a head by the perspicacity of the late Edwin Ash, Secretary of the Richmond Club, who, realizing this, called a meeting of all clubs for the purpose of forming a union. The two most important resolutions passed at that meeting were: (a) "That in the opinion of this meeting the

formation of a Rugby Football Society is desirable, that such a Society be formed forthwith, and that the co-operation of all clubs be invited." (b) "That the Society be called 'The Rugby Football Union.'" Both were carried unanimously.

To three old Rugbeians on the newly formed committee was given the duty of drafting a code of by-laws and laws of the game.

The next important landmark in the history of the game occurred in the same year, when on March 27 the first international between England and Scotland took place at Edinburgh. Twenty players on each side played—three full-backs, one three-quarter, three half-backs, and thirteen forwards. The English team was captained by F. Stokes, and Scotland by the Hon. F. I. Moncrieff. The late Dr. Almond, Head Master of Loretto, was referee. Scotland won by a goal and a try to a try, and it is an interesting feature of the game that the try scored for England was gained by R. H. Birkett, father of the famous Harlequin and English international three-quarter, J. G. G. Birkett, who until this year held the record of twenty-one international caps. This record has now been beaten by C. N. Lowe with twenty-five. Of the forty players in this match, ten English and six Scottish survive. All the surviving members were invited, as the guests of the Scottish Union, to Inverleith in March, 1921, to celebrate the jubilee of the match. At the dinner afterwards, in the evening, all the old players present made characteristic speeches.

In the season 1871-2 the first meeting between Oxford and Cambridge took place.



Until the season 1875-6, no game could be won unless a goal was kicked. In November, 1875, it was decided that a match could be won by a majority of tries, but it was many years before a single goal did not outweigh any number of tries.

Another important feature in the development of the game, which had far-reaching effects on its strategy, was the verdict of the 'Varsities, in the same season, to reduce the players to fifteen a-side in the Inter-'Varsity contest, a practice which two years later was adopted for all international matches.

In 1878 the Calcutta Cup was presented to the Rugby Union by the original Calcutta Football Club on their disbandment, to be played for annually between England and Scotland, and the results of the matches with the names of the respective captains, are inscribed on the cup each year.

Meanwhile the game was spreading in the North and in the other countries, which warranted the inclusion of the Northern representatives on the R.U. Committee, and the formation of the Scottish, Irish, and Welsh Rugby Unions.

Another important development occurred in the season 1880-1, when three three-quarter backs first played in an international match for Scotland against Ireland. England and Wales adopted the increase the following year, as did Ireland a year later. In 1885-6 the Cardiff team introduced the innovation of four three-quarter backs, with such a large measure of success that Wales adopted this formation on several occasions afterwards. It was not until the season 1893-4 that the other unions favoured the increase.

It was entirely due, however, in England, to the ingenuity of H. Vassall, the Oxford captain, and Alan Rotherham, that the system of passing amongst the three-quarters and the creation of openings by the half-backs was carried to such a high degree of perfection, which revolutionized outside play. It is interesting to note that seventeen Oxford players of the Vassall era obtained international honours.

In the year 1893 the Northern Union was formed. Rugby had made such great strides in the North amongst all classes that the players found a great demand was made upon their time in travelling to carry out important fixtures. In many cases it meant a loss of time, with a consequent loss of wages, which they could ill afford to lose. In these cases it was suggested that broken-time payment should be introduced and legalized by the Rugby Union, and at a General Meeting in 1893 the Yorkshire clubs proposed a resolution: "That players be allowed compensation for *bona fide* loss of time." An amendment, "That this meeting believes that the above principle is contrary to the true interest of the game and its spirit, and declines to sanction the same," was carried, and as a result the Northern Union, which allowed payment for loss of time, was formed. The next season full-blown professionalism was adopted by the Northern Union.

It is very interesting to modern Rugby enthusiasts to note that the proposer and seconder of the amendment were Mr. William Cail (the present Treasurer of the Rugby Union) and Mr. Rowland Hill (a past President) respectively. It was in the following year, 1894, that

Mr. William Cail was appointed Honorary Treasurer of the Rugby Union, a post he has held with such conspicuous success ever since.

During the season 1886-7 the late King Edward, or, as he then was, Prince of Wales, honoured the Rugby Union by becoming its patron. On accession to the throne, King George succeeded his illustrious father, and has since shown a very keen interest and detailed knowledge of the game in subsequent visits to various International, 'Varsity, Hospital Cup, and the respective Service matches.

In the following year a team toured Australia and New Zealand—the first time on record that a tour was carried out—and in the autumn of the same year we received a visit from New Zealand. Since that day the game has made remarkable progress in the several Dominions, and the South Africans, the last visiting team to tour these islands, in 1913, inflicted defeats on all four countries. The value to Rugby football of the visit of the Dominion players to these islands cannot be overestimated. The finer points of the game are invariably brought out, public interest in the game stimulated, and a higher standard of play results.

In 1905-6 the first international match against France was played, and, as was only to be expected, resulted in an easy win for England, the first of a series of successes which has continued until the present day, with the single exception of a drawn game at Twickenham in 1922. Do not let it be inferred that French Rugby has made little progress. Certainly until 1914 little progress was made, but since the war, France

has become one of our most formidable rivals on the field of Rugby football.

The season of 1905-6 also saw the first adoption of the present scoring values of the game, and the purchase of the Rugby Union ground at Twickenham, where England has suffered one defeat only, by South Africa in 1913. The wisdom of the Union's policy in buying a ground of its own, although much discussed and bitterly opposed in some quarters at the time, has been abundantly justified since, and the only effective criticism that one could make against Mr. Cail, who, I believe, was mainly responsible for the adventure, was that, in the light of present-day experience, the ground is not capable of holding the vast crowds who frequent it on international days.

On August 13, 1914, a circular was sent out by the Rugby Union Committee urging all its members to join one of the Forces. Later it was proposed to form a Rugby Footballers' Battalion, but it was too late, as all the members had joined one or other of the fighting units. The losses naturally sustained were heavy, and twenty-six English internationals and thirty Scottish ones paid the extreme sacrifice. Of the four teams who played for the London Scottish on the last Saturday of the season 1913-14, forty-five members were killed—a remarkable record.

Reading the history and details of the Rugby Union, a glow of pride swells up in favour of those who have been responsible for our destiny. It has been my privilege, during six years of international Rugby, to meet those in command of Rugby football in this country, and nothing has impressed me more than the

natural abhorrence of all members to the slightest sign of professionalism or vestige of unfairness. Rugby football is a sport, vital for the good of our country ; and it is as a sport, and not as a business, that it must always remain.



## CHAPTER XVI

### SELECTION COMMITTEE AND SECRETARY

Policy of stamping out Unfair Play—Extreme Patience in choosing the Right Team—An Old Theory—Evidence of Sound Judgment—Charles Marriott and my "Carelessness."

THIS book has long lost the startling element of novelty, but it is refreshing, after groping my way through a mass of technical data and facts, to recommence and to place on record an appreciation of those who are maintaining the standard of Rugby football in this country at its present high level.

By the victory of England in the international championship of 1923, the English Selection Committee added yet another memorable achievement to their long record of services to the followers of Rugby football. Few people realize the signal acts of self-sacrifice which Mr. James Baxter and the four other members make for their country—acts which involve long journeys, and six months of arduous, and in some respects invidious, work under trying circumstances. But I have never, during my long personal acquaintance with them, two years before the war and four after, known them to hesitate when they felt they could do useful work for the good of Rugby football. Theirs has been a conspicuous success, not judged

solely by the results of the matches of the English team during their tenure of office, but by the spirit which they, by their labours, individually and jointly, have infused into English Rugby—by their intense desire to stamp out all traces of unfairness in English play, a policy carried out rightly so, even to the point of injuring individual interests. Their work during this time has evoked no serious protest from any responsible quarter—a great tribute to their labour. They owe much to their president, Mr. James Baxter, for his intense enthusiasm for the game, and to the genuine co-operation which animates the Committee during their labours. Theirs has been no easy task; it is no uncommon thing for them to sit for six or seven hours to select the team. It would be idle to suppose that each member subscribed unreservedly his agreement to every player selected, but the joint recommendations to the public in the teams chosen have evoked universal satisfaction throughout the country, and have shown a breadth of vision and courage of conception rarely shown by such bodies.

There is an old theory that in some mysterious fashion players take upon themselves the standard of the play in which they perform. There is no logical reason to this conclusion. It is, however, impossible to watch games and certain individuals without being consciously reminded of it, or without actually perceiving that the standard of play evinced in some players reflects their environment. Certain players appear insignificant when they are among insignificant players, but when they appear among





CHAIRMAN OF THE ENGLISH SELECTION  
COMMITTEE

*John B. ...*



SECRETARY OF THE  
RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

*Charles H. ...*

players of proved calibre they take upon themselves the higher standard of their company. The English Selection Committee have often discovered just that spark of brilliancy which stamps a class player even in the mediocre company sometimes of second-class football. And yet the reverse more often obtains. Players who, in their natural surroundings stand out far ahead of their fellow-players, fail badly when put to the supreme test in higher company. The Selection Committee's task is infinitely harder in this country owing to the large field to be covered and the wider range of the standard of play in first-class football. In Wales and the other countries there is a more uniform excellence, which makes their task easier. Our Committee can be proud of their work. In 1909-10, England won the championship outright—the first time since 1891-2, and since 1909 we have been successful on no fewer than seven occasions—a glowing tribute to the excellence of their work. If success is measured by wins, the full measure of it is theirs; but a greater triumph lay in the ability to win popularity everywhere, without seeming ever to cultivate it—remarkable evidence of sound judgment. The public and keen Rugby football followers were satisfied that the Selection Committee did not neglect the legitimate claim of any individual, or sacrificed under the pressure of newspaper criticism the best interests of team selection. In the first two years after the war, they demonstrated clearly their capacity during a period of unprecedented difficulty,—and I am certain no player ever lost confidence in their judgment.



No book on Rugby football would be complete without a passing reference to the worthy secretary of the Rugby Union.

Charles Marriott, as he is affectionately referred to by all, Charles by his more intimate friends, is known personally or by name to all players in the country. His is an original and attractive personality, and no other official of the English Rugby Union will ever occupy quite the same place in the affections of the Rugby football world of his day.

Mr. Marriott is possessed of a very shrewd common sense, imagination, a kind heart, and a vivid interest in every side of the Rugby footballer's life, and is filled with a most ardent patriotism for the good and purity of the game.

His care for our comfort on long journeys, his scrupulous honesty and fair-mindedness in a very trying job, endear him to the hearts of us all. Rugby football has been fortunate to possess a secretary with such outstanding characteristics.

Bohemian in his dress and certain of his habits, Mr. Marriott has much of the old-fashioned geniality. His real enemies must be few or none, and though he freely indulges in grumbling at things and persons which offend him, it is a passing phase, and there is no one who has at heart a sturdier faith in the sound common sense of the average Rugby footballer.

"You have been selected to play for England *v.* The South at Twickenham on Saturday, December 2. Please let me know by return if you can play."

This was the first of many similar communications which I received from the secretary of the Rugby

Union, and from that day a mutual respect sprang up between us, which has lasted ever since. My first meeting with Mr. Marriott was on the aforementioned Saturday, after the match, when in a very peremptory but paternal manner he asked whether I had received my tea ticket. The answer was in the negative, and I was promptly accused of having lost it. It was fortunate that I had made other arrangements for tea, and the seriousness of my crime was mitigated by my refusal to accept a duplicate.

The distribution of the tea and luncheon tickets must take years off our genial secretary's life.

My reputation for carelessness was further enhanced in my first away international in Ireland in the same season.

I lost my railway ticket. This indeed was a tragedy. How could I break the news to Mr. Marriott, who was then in the middle of a heated argument with the dining-car attendant as to whether our party numbered twenty or twenty-one. The news was eventually broken to him, and the result cannot be described in mere pedestrian prose. For the remainder of the journey I was kept under the vigilant eye of the secretary, and was made to travel with him.

These two small incidents seemed to bring us closer together, and into a more intimate acquaintanceship, and in all our long travels I never missed an opportunity of travelling part of the journey with him.

It needs a very portentous memory to recall his playing days. Suffice it to say that he played for England with marked distinction from 1884 to 1887.

He will, however, to the present generation, be best known for his invaluable and whole-hearted services as secretary of the Rugby Union, to which post he was appointed in 1906.

Since that time, except during 1914-1919, when at the age of fifty-five he joined up, and went through the war in France and elsewhere, his labours have been given ungrudgingly for the good of the game.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE GAME IN FRANCE

Progress since the War—An Anxious Moment—Deficiency of French Forwards—Stand-off Half wanted—Bad Refereeing—Inadvisability of Cup Competitions—Tours of English Teams.

ONE of the most satisfactory features of post-war Rugby football has been the wonderful advance made by the French. Games, as I have mentioned before, are social factors, the importance of which in the life of a nation cannot be estimated easily. Rugby football, before the war, was an affair which concerned ourselves and the Dominions, and he is a cynic who would not subscribe to the value of its imperial work. The fame of the game is spreading. There is no stronger tie than the athletic one, and an extension of the rivalry in games, and Rugby football in particular, between the picked athletes of other countries, will provide us with a mutual understanding which even politicians will find it difficult to undermine.

It was in 1887, nearly fifty years ago, that Rugby football was first started in Paris, although it was not until nearly twenty years later that the first international with England was played. As was natural, we won very easily. Great advances were made, but even in 1914 the margin in our favour was almost as great.

During the war Rugby football was played by most of the French units behind the lines, with the result that new clubs have been started all over France. The result, judged by recent international matches, has been more than commensurate with the effort, and France, in spite of her defeats, is rapidly advancing in her knowledge of the game, and to-day is one of our most formidable competitors.

It was widely thought that our coolness in an emergency, or, what the French people call our *sang-froid*, would always carry us to victory. This educational process has received a shock lately, and although France has yet to register her first win against us, a moral victory was surely hers at Twickenham in 1922. Want of coolness at a critical moment has undoubtedly cost France dearly in the past, but these temperamental faults are being slowly overcome.

I remember at Twickenham in 1920, near the end of the game, our defence was hopelessly beaten. Four French forwards, with the ball in the loose under perfect control, were within a few yards of our line, when, through sheer excitement or bewilderment at the prospect of scoring, nothing was done. One of our players rushed across and easily saved the situation. It was an anxious moment, as we were leading by only 8 points to 3 at the time.

The qualities necessary to play Rugby football are not the monopoly of any particular nation. Every game, and this one especially, has its surprises and difficulties. It is these which test the greatness of a player. The majority of the international players come from the South of France, where the inhabitants



of the Basque country show a natural aptitude for playing all ball games. Is there any reason to suppose that Frenchmen, with their vivid imagination and affluence of thought, will lag behind the other nations? The French are a great people, and moreover are a great many people. So her future success cannot be long delayed.

The development of Rugby football in France has been retarded because of the inability of forwards to scrummage properly; because she has not, as yet, produced a stand-off half above mediocrity; and, lastly, because of the paucity of good referees. In my chapter on "Forward Play" I called attention to the tendency of French forwards to avoid a good fixed scrum. Not only is this delaying sound team-work, but at times it reduces the game almost to a farce, as witnessed at Twickenham in 1922. As I have said before, but it bears reiteration, to shove, and keep on shoving in the scrum, is a habit only acquired after much practice. Once acquired, it is easily lost, and so every effort must be made to preserve it. France pays too little attention to sound forward principles, which is unfortunate, for a solid scrum is the foundation-stone—the only secure one—of good Rugby football. She must remember that it is easier to cajole dangerous tendencies rather than defeat them, and no appreciable advance will be made until her packs learn how to scrummage.

It is remarkable that France has not produced a stand-off half above average club form. Up to the present, the French halves, individually and as a pair, sacrifice everything to getting the ball out to the

three-quarter line. As a general rule, taking into account the exceptional speed of their outsides, their policy may be condoned; but the possession of speed, even to a generous degree, does not make a Rugby footballer or a successful Rugby football team, and openings must be made before we can turn it to a profitable account. During the season 1923, it was thought that a stand-off half, Lacazadiou, was found, who possessed the necessary characteristics for the position—an unorthodox player in attack, who, however, possessed a sound knowledge of the game. After the match against Wales at Swansea, it was realized that Lacazadiou was not stereotyped. He caused the Welshmen on their soil much anxiety—a sure tribute to his worth. The good opinion was confirmed in a subsequent game when playing for the French against the British Army. It came as a great surprise that he was not chosen to play against England. Whether a reversion to the old type was justified is a debatable point. It was nearly successful against England, because two of our three-quarters, Lowe and Smallwood, were damaged and almost ineffective throughout the game. I think the policy was wrong, however. A stand-off half must be a versatile footballer, and not an automaton. Until this principle is realized and accepted, progress of outside play in France will be slow and featureless.

Although every player in France is daily increasing in knowledge of the game, I am afraid the same cannot be said of the referees, who in their interpretation of the laws of Rugby show a crudeness of mind not usually associated with these officials. One of

the principles upon which the structure of games depends is the submission of the player to the decision of the referee. At the same time, a player is entitled, in return, to a broad and generous interpretation of the rules. The game in France has outgrown its infancy. It is unfortunate that the referee has not kept pace with the play. The lag between them is alarming. There is only one panacea. All old players should take up refereeing when their playing days are over. I am not certain that the French Rugby Union are paying the attention, which the seriousness of the subject warrants, to this question. It is a difficult problem. A successful solution of it lies along the lines I have indicated. Those of us who have toured in France realize the import of my remarks. The refereeing is not only bad ; it is farcical at times. It is a pity that the fair name of Rugby football should be besmirched by the mentality of these individuals.

It is with great diffidence that I remark upon the annual competition, held in France, which, in the considered opinion of the governing body there, has done so much for the game. In 1892, the club championship, consisting of five clubs, was started. Thirty years later over 800 teams were competing, divided into four different series, according to their strength. Cups are awarded for the winning teams in each series.

It is a delicate matter, perhaps, to refer to. One may be only too ready to moralize on the decadence of any form of sport, but in England we have ample evidence of the pernicious results of playing games for any prize. A tremendous fight was made in this

country in the early nineties to keep Rugby football a purely amateur game. It was, I believe, during this campaign that the harmful effects of cup competitions on the play and spirit of the game were brought out. It was decided by the Rugby Union to allow those in existence to continue, but not to encourage any new ones.

Cup competitions are dying out over here. The Kent Cup, which was originally given for the best Rugby team in the county, is now played for by second-class clubs, and I can speak from personal experience that the final in 1911 was a most unpleasant game, due entirely to the fact that we were playing for a cup.

Another instance which is worthy of quotation is the Devon Senior Cup Competition, where the representatives of the senior clubs in Devon met and decided not to enter for the cup competitions, as undoubtedly it was harmful for the game.

In league and cup matches the spectators are too prone to look for a win at all costs. The players and the referee are apt to be affected by, and take their cue from, the spectators on the touch-line. At Rugby football there is no prize but the honour of winning, and unless all are prepared to play the game in this spirit, it is not worth playing, and it is the unanimous opinion in this country that no competition should be encouraged.

France must profit from our experience.

Rugby football, above all games, is a sport and not a business, and every endeavour must be made to keep this principle well in the foreground. There is

no finer characteristic in the life of a nation than its love of sport, and there is no more manly sport than Rugby football, when the only prize is victory.

Commencing in 1921, the Navy team has toured in France each year, and has returned home with thoroughly agreeable recollections of their visit. In 1922 we went over with an unbeaten record, having won in turn against the Harlequins, Devon County, the Army and Air Force, and turned out as good a side as we have ever had. The record was held, but never was a greater struggle necessary to maintain it. The French people show just as much eagerness to welcome us, as we do to visit them.

The Rugby Federation are more than ever anxious to encourage teams like the Navy, Cambridge University, etc., to tour for educational purposes. The Navy and 'Varsity teams on tour may be said to be representative of first-class English football, and, if I may venture to say so, the product of what is best in Rugby football, as both by their long standing traditions have been brought up in a school which subordinates the interest of winning to the spirit of the game.

The Navy team was received everywhere with the greatest enthusiasm. Our tours have always been unqualified successes, and I should like to place on record our deep appreciation of the efforts which have been made to carry them through to a successful conclusion, a task which requires detailed organization and minute care. The President of the French Rugby Union, M. Lery, and the Secretary, Mr. Rutherford, have been unfailing in their attentions, and have considerably lightened the task of those in charge of



our arrangements. I had ample opportunities of discussing these tours with many of the leading delegates of Rugby football in France. Without exception, all were most eulogistic as to their importance and value in promoting the true spirit and best interests of our noble game and fostering a good feeling between the two countries.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE LIGHTER SIDE

“ Dreadnought ” Harrison and Adrian Stoop—Getting naturalized !  
—The Astonished French Forward—Monsieur Davies’s Dancing  
—Mistaken Identity—Lord Fisher gets busy—Arranging  
Fixtures.

AS I have said previously, a Rugby footballer leads an exacting life, and the seriousness of playing the game is shown in the standard of fitness demanded, but there is a lighter side to his career. It is natural that in the long travels to Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and France, reminiscences should be discussed, and amusing incidents of the game one loves so dearly recalled. A memory dulled and perverted by technical data and facts fails badly when I attempt to repeat these amusing tales. Time always treats us very scurvily in this respect, and betrays our mental failure. That there is a lighter side to our life is manifest to those who attend the various annual dinners—distinctive features of the London clubs. The wit of Lyall Grant or Harry Grierson, the persuasive gentleness of Hoyer Millar, the pregnant brevity of Bill Maclagan or Temple Gurdon, the forceful terseness of Charles Usher, will live long in our memories. Footballers may not be good after-dinner speakers. The speeches, judged from an academic

standpoint, are usually least wise, but they are acceptable for all that, and there is usually a ready wit which appeals to everybody.

This after-dinner wit often spreads, in the form of delicate spices of flattery or rapier-like thrusts, to the football field, where, during the interludes of a strenuous game, it is even more welcome.

Many interesting tales have been told about Wing-Commander Louis Greig, Equerry to the Duke of York, the old Services and Scottish international captain, and his language on the field. Two ladies were standing outside the Services' ground at Portsmouth one Saturday afternoon. "What shall we do this afternoon?" said one. "Let's go and hear Louis Greig play Rugby," was the other's laconic reply.

The only other tale which will bear publication occurred in one of the Army *v.* Navy matches at Queen's Club. The Navy forwards were heeling the ball regularly. Louis Greig, playing scrum-half and captaining the side, was sending out swift and accurate passes to his partner, who invariably dropped them. The next scrummage was on the touch-line, near the centre of the main stand. The Navy heeled the ball. The stand-off half again failed to hold it. This was too much for the dour Scot, who held up his hands in disgust and shouted: "Heavens! you'd drop it if I handed it to you on a plate."

H. C. Harrison was another whose sayings never failed to amuse us, and who was a master in the art of repartee on the field.

Mention of H. C. recalls an incident on the Officers'

ground at Portsmouth. The Harlequins were the visitors at the beginning of the season 1913-14. "Dreadnought" Harrison was captain of the home team, and Adrian Stoop of the Harlequins. The grass was long, and during the interval, Stoop, in his best cavalier manner, shouted across to H.C. :

"When are you going to cut the hay?"

"As soon as you get your tongue clipped, ole bean!" was the apt reply of the U.S. captain.

Harking back again to the pre-war days, an amusing incident occurred in the corresponding match a few seasons earlier, when the late C. H. Abercrombie and G. D. Roberts were playing on opposite sides. During the first half, feeling was very high, and in a heated argument at half-time, Abercrombie remarked :

"I thought I was going to play against gentlemen this afternoon."

"I didn't," was G. D. Roberts's laconic reply.

The United Services were due to play the London Welsh. It was our first appearance on the Wandsworth ground in 1921, and coming in December, just before the Welsh match, considerable interest was taken by our hosts in the play of the English half-backs. My opposite number was another Services player, who had an impediment in his speech, and who would persist in shouting, "Watch Davies carefully," whenever we were in their "25."

We were scrummaging on their goal-line, and our friend was getting very excited, and attempted to shout: "Don't forget, watch Davies carefully." But the word "watch" was too much for him. The ball was put into the scrum, heeled, and a try scored,

with an orthodox movement by the wing three-quarter, while my opposite number was still wrestling with the word "wa—wa——"

The following telegram, purporting to come from me, was read out at the London Welsh dinner, on the eve of the last England *v.* Wales match at Twickenham :

"Sorry I cannot attend dinner. Am very busy getting naturalized. Davies."

A very amusing incident occurred in one of the England and France matches. It was a French throw-in, in their own "25," and, as is usually the custom on these occasions, a short line was taken. A winging French forward was about ten or twelve yards at the end of the line. Seeing his apparently favourable position, he gesticulated wildly and shouted :

"A moi, je suis tout seul."

Unfortunately for the Frenchman, Stoker Tom Woods, R.N., the heaviest forward in the English pack, and Private E. R. Gardner, ex-champion boxer of the Royal Marines, arrived simultaneously with the ball.

The look on the astonished Frenchman's face, when he had disentangled himself from the miniature scrum, defies description.

Many amusing incidents occurred during the Navy tour in France in April, 1922.

After the Marseilles match, we were entertained at the Exhibition. About fifty sat down to dinner, including representatives of all the civic and municipal authorities of the neighbourhood. We were separated from the main dining-hall of the Exhibition by a large glass screen. After the various speeches had been made, a very attractive French lady and some friends



sat down at one of the side-tables in the Exhibition Hall. Her peculiar charm did not pass unnoticed by the Navy team, and later, after a lengthy discussion, it was decided to send the good lady a bouquet of flowers made up from the vases on our tables. As captain of the side, I was deputed to write the following message and attach it to the bouquet: "With the Compliments of the British Naval Rugby Team."

A waiter was called, and, after winding his way through a labyrinth of tables, the flowers were duly delivered.

At the same moment, I was hailed by the Vice-President of the Marseilles Rugby Club, who was sitting at the head of our table: "Thank you, Mr. Davies, that is *my wife*."

At Grenoble we were entertained to a civic reception after the match. At a dance in the evening, one of the French ladies remarked to Kershaw: "Ah! Monsieur Davies on the football field—superb; on the dancing floor, oh! mon Dieu."

The following letter, which I received just after the former American Ambassador, Mr. J. W. Davis, left the country in 1921 to return home, is amusing:

THE BRIARS,

HANWELL, W.7.

DEAR SIR,—

I think, perhaps, you would enjoy the following little story.

Yesterday morning at breakfast, I remarked to my wife what a pretty compliment the Navy paid to Mr. Davis.

"What was that?" chipped in my son Bob, aged thirteen, a great Rugby enthusiast, who has seen you play many times; so I told him that the Navy had lent nine destroyers to escort Davis down the Channel.

"Well," said he, "and why not? Isn't he the best half-back England ever had?"

Yours faithfully,

(Sd.) J. H. WOLFE.

A very characteristic reply from the late Lord Fisher in answer to a request from the Secretary of the United Services for his support is worthy of record. "The United Services," he said, "shall have the tallest goal-posts in England," and he sent out and ordered the Dockyard to build them at once.

Difficulty is often experienced by secretaries in arranging their fixture lists. London clubs are very slack in this respect. In answer to a letter from the United Services, respecting the fixtures for the following season against Richmond, Lawless replied: "Let's say 'Yes' to the 14th November, *for the present*."

Lyall Grant, the London Scottish secretary, when asked at the beginning of the season 1923-24 to confirm dates for the following year, replied confirming, and suggesting dates for 1933-34.

Well, I must conclude. I hope there will always be a lighter side to our football. We must not clothe ourselves in a mantle of moroseness. Wit and humour are as necessary for the esprit de corps of the side as the mental seriousness shown sometimes in our play. Wherever Rugby football is played, we shall find that a happy, contented, and light-hearted team is a successful one.

## AN APPRECIATION

By B. BENNISON

WHEN the late David Gallaher came to this country as captain of the New Zealand team of Rugby footballers, we had developed slackness to an extraordinary degree ; our Rugby, by comparison with what it is to-day, was poor. There was something of traditional blood and iron in it, to be sure, but the best sides we were able to build suffered to be routed by the amazing Gallaher and his equally amazing men. And even the Old Guard, inclined to smugness and contentedness, happy in the domesticity of which our Rugby told, and stood for, were awakened to the fact that we were all wrong ; and there came about a conspiracy so tremendous, so thorough, to mend our ways, that the lessons having to do with the need for complete physical fitness, enthusiasm, and tensivity of purpose taught by the " All Blacks " were assimilated in time for the coming of Paul Roos, the Morkels, and Marsburg and Joubert, and Villiers and Stegman, from South Africa. We had then gone far towards putting our house in order.

Our Rugby conscience had been so hurt by the ruthless exposure of our weaknesses that we set out

to give to the grand old game a new life. And we have succeeded undoubtedly; we have taught the non-Rugby man the delights, the wonders, the chivalry of Rugby; its strength and popularity were never greater than to-day. Rugby has won for itself a generous Press; it has been made the intimate concern of the people. Maybe the Old Stager sees in the immense popularity of the game much that offends his susceptibilities. There are still those—and I would not quarrel with them unduly—to whom the very mention of “gate” is anathema. But although I hope the day will never come when Rugby football will be regarded as a mere spectacle, a thing with the trappings of the circus, the fact that more people regularly attend matches than perhaps at any other period in the history of the game, is all to the game’s good; it makes for and maintains a high standard of skill. The vanity that is in every one of us prevents slackness and indifference to personal distinction when one is asked to do a specific thing with the people looking on. I see only healthiness in the crowds which now watch Rugby football.

In this which I write I would strive not to be invidious, but, so far as English Rugby is concerned, I feel that its revival and its complete recovery from the lopping off of a considerable portion of the northern centres—i.e. the coming into being of the Northern Union or Rugby League—was largely brought about by Adrian Stoop when he and his brother Harlequins set up house at Twickenham. No player within my time, by his personality, by his genius, and, if I may say so, by his extravagant unorthodoxy, has

done more than Adrian Stoop towards the re-creation—such a term, I insist, is permissible—of our Rugby as it was when Gallaher's army found it ridiculously easy to play skittles with our best sides. Stoop at Twickenham set up a dictatorship; out of the Harlequins, as represented by Sibree, John Birkett, Ronald Poulton, Lambert, and others of a great brotherhood, he produced a classic. For a time crusted Rugby Unionists were disposed to liken Stoop unto a high priest of handball; they mistook his daring, his individuality, for something which was foreign to bed-rock Rugger. The romping, rollicking victories which so often came the way of the Harlequins in years before the war were not after the heart of the old cronies. To me I only saw in the play of the Harlequins the beginning of a new, a better, a more purposeful era. The "All Blacks" and the South African side under Roos justified the open game to the hilt. I remember one notable critic shedding tears of blood because on a famous occasion Stoop passed instead of kicking for touch in his own "25" and had his pass intercepted. Something perilously near to the arch-wrecker of Rugby principles Stoop was described; it was denied that Stoop had the right to gamble in ideas which were peculiarly his own, though it was already notorious that he had forced the conclusion upon us that he could win matches off his own bat.

To what extent, if any, Stoop inspired William John Abbott Davies (in whose book I am happy to set down these impressions) I would never pretend to say. But at least it was to the undoubted good



of our Rugby that Davies followed Stoop as his country's stand-off half. Davies not only took up where the famous Harlequin left off with abundant success, but he enriched the game by his own personality. There was much in common between the two. The only difference, as I see it, is this: Stoop was the pioneer in the making of our Rugby as it is to-day; Davies, first in association with the late F. E. Oakley, and later and more definitely with C. A. Kershaw, carried on the good work.

My association with Rugby began in 1887; since then I have seen all the players of all the countries. I have known many giant half-backs. I question whether anyone has played exactly the same part in the game in an international sense as Davies has done. We felt that Davies was indispensable to "big" Rugby after seeing him in his very first game in town. He won all the critics over to him. His first international was in the year before the war, against Wales, with W. I. Cheesman, the old Merchant Taylor, at the base of the scrum, and fittingly enough he played an all-important part in sending V. M. H. Coates to obtain the first try got by England at Cardiff for twenty years. I have but a small mind for statistics—I take the view that, oftener than not, they prove very little—and I cannot tell how many points Davies scored during all the ten years he was in the game. He dropped goals and scored tries times without number; if I say that he was a match-winner, I think I hit him off precisely. His attack was insistent; it was also his defence. So long as he was on the field, you never could tell what he would

do. There must have been scores of times when he pulled a match out of the fire. I shall never forget the Services' match in 1921. There was but a minute to go ; the Navy were behind ; by a wonderful effort Davies gave victory to his side by a single point. And shall we who saw the match ever forget the try which he scored a year later against Scotland at Twickenham, or his daring, bewildering run by which he saved his country in the same season against France ?

I will not delve into the long past by way of striking a comparison with Davies ; we have all our pet personalities, our little gods, but to me there are three Englishmen who more than any other captured my imagination during the past ten years—Stoop, Ronald Poulton, and W. J. A. Davies. I doubt whether we have ever had three such arresting players. Stoop perhaps, at times, was rather remiss in a strictly defensive way, but he was unquestionably a genius ; and I would give him pride of place for what in a creative and administrative sense he has done for the game. Ronald Poulton had the charm, the sunny disposition, as well as the cleverness, few players had. They used to say that Poulton was a doubtful tackler ; before he went to war—alas, like so many Rugby stalwarts, never to return—he, just as little Lowe did, showed that he could tackle with the best of them. But no responsible critic has to my knowledge ever found a serious flaw in the football of Davies. Of course, he blundered now and then ; infallibility can never be ; but even on his worst days there was always that in his play which told of the

uncommon, the great footballer. From the moment that, for international purposes, he became linked up with Kershaw, he was the deciding force in English Rugby. Perhaps, in his final season, there were occasions when he appeared to have lost his old touch, but to the last we believed him to be incomparable among stand-off half-backs. He made his Rugby appear to be so effortless; there was never in his ways a suggestion that he was straining after effect; and yet it was natural for him to colour and give sparkle to his play. There was a quiet about his methods that disguised his cleverness, which at times was supreme. For instance, first appearances did not suggest that he had it in him to run faster than most men. His speed over a short distance was tremendous. Davies out for a try, with all the odds apparently against him, was a sheer delight. No back ever knew what was really at the back of the mind of Davies. Very largely he was a law unto himself, and this very fact constituted his greatness. I would not say that he did not have definite ideas, but I make bold to say that anything approaching to the stereotyped he disliked and would never have. Which was exactly the way with Adrian Stoop, his immediate predecessor.

"Why will Stoop make faces at the accepted principles of Rugger?" was a question repeatedly asked. The answer, though never reduced to so many words, was:

"Because he cannot help tilting at the old-fashioned."

I would tell a story, and by way of a preface to

it I would have you understand that I have but a small, an impossible mind for dates and places. I believe it was in the first match between England and Wales at Twickenham. Before the game I went into the dressing-room set apart for the players of the Principality, where I encountered good Willie Trew and that arch-schemer, Dicky Owen. The Welshmen, as ever, were determined to win, and so, I was told, they had decided upon a plan of campaign that would shut out the outrageously unorthodox Stoop and the snipe-like Poulton. Bancroft (what a full-back !) kicked off ; Stoop in his own " 25 " fielded the ball. The obvious, the text-book sort of thing, was for the chief of the Harlequins to find touch : But no ; he darted forward, left Dicky Owen flabbergasted, threw the ball to Poulton, who, darting here and there, went through the defence like a knife, and in less time than it takes to record the fact England had scored. Stoop had offended grievously against accepted principles, but he had put Wales in a losing position, and the very men who gasped with astonishment because he had outraged the obvious were in high glee.

Now Davies, in point of daring, in his refusal to fashion his Rugby by rule of thumb, was of the school as personified by Stoop. The difference—an important difference—was that whereas the Services man, if the occasion and circumstances demanded, would nurse his forwards by touch-finding, Stoop almost invariably, no matter how the game was going, sought victory through the medium of his backs. In this particular I think that the author of this book was

a surer match-winner than Stoop. Davies had it in him to play two sharply distinctive games; he was more adaptable than Stoop, and he had a greater gift for disguising the full strength of his hand. The impression which Davies gave off was that at the right moment he would play the Ace to the other fellow's King. I saw in Davies something of the Sphinx; in his football, and to the majority of his opponents, he was inscrutable. The concealment of his full and true capacity made for his power.

At his best, I doubt whether we have had a player with a surer pair of hands. That he was fortunate to have at the base of the scrum such a quick-thinking man as Kershaw was always obvious. The understanding which the two had, had much to do with the success of the English sides in which Davies appeared, but he it was who was the pivot of his country's football. He had an extraordinary gift for anticipating what was about to happen: his preparedness under all manner of conditions was really wonderful; and though he was an individualist, if ever there was one, his individualism never took the form of selfishness. In no game have I known him play for his hand; he stood for the team spirit, but never was he shy to do things on his own account. If he thought he could get through the defence, he had no mind for his fellows; he just went ahead on his own, and, if he failed in his purpose, we rarely complained. Always did we like Davies to do as he pleased; and because he did so he will go down in the history of the Rugby game as a giant



of half-backs, as well as a magnificent leader of men.

I have seen him against strikingly different opponents. Can you have two greater opposites than a typical Welsh and Scottish side, for instance, and is there a similarity between them and an Irish eight? Yet Davies, helped by Kershaw, has been able to play according to his lights and as the occasion demanded. Except that he had a way with him which caused him to tower high above his fellows, Davies was seldom alike two games running. I have known him out-Stoop Stoop in many of the big matches, in that he has taken all manner of risks by way of opening up play and making his backs the real, the deciding attack; and I have known him to kick for touch in a fashion and with a frequency that must have rejoiced the heart of the stickler for orthodoxy and the old-fashioned; when, indeed, he might have been of the Scottish instead of one of the most original members of the new England school as built up by Adrian Stoop.

It is my considered opinion that, to a greater degree than may be generally supposed, he appreciated the value of half-back play. The idea obtains, and there is much to be said for it, that the value of a side depends upon the work of the forwards.

"Give me a good, sound, hard-working pack," I can hear more than a score of my Rugby Unionist friends say, "and you can have all your backs." But whilst a team can be no team at all unless it is powerfully equipped forward, with such half-backs as Davies and Kershaw proved to be a team, though

imperfect forward, may reap abundant success. During the years Davies was of the England side we did not have the best of the countries' packs; but we suffered but one international defeat since 1913. The physical power of Kershaw, his biting tackle, his general robustness, allied with the rapidity of Davies's thinking and acting and his unconventionality, made for a great wedge which England's backs as a whole were able to drive through the different sides they encountered. I have often heard it said that only Davies could take the ball as it came to him like lightning from Kershaw. That he had as safe a pair of hands as any half-back we have had in the game cannot be denied, but it was not only because of the ease and sureness with which he invariably fielded the ball that made for greatness; his greatness had for its definite source his masterly positional play, his keen, unerring eye, and most times an almost uncanny gift to turn defence into attack by one stroke.

There was much that was paradoxical in the football of Davies. He came into the game to win a rare triumph for the individualist, and yet in actuality he was one of a crowd in that he made for a harmonious whole; his unselfishness, just as often as the things he himself embarked upon and carried through, won victory. And we owed as much to his captaincy as we owed to his own personal ability. Unconsciously, but none the less true, the football of each and every team in which I have seen him he made revolve around himself. He emphasized what Adrian Stoop before him told us: that the stand-off half

was no mere purveyor of passes, but a team's pivot. Few half-backs have I known who so consistently did the right thing at the right moment. If his forwards were holding out signals of distress, he would nurse them by his kicking; his patient waiting for the moment to strike was not the least feature of his football.

Davies was a great tactician as well as a great philosopher.

In his brilliant and long career he gave many tries away, and often did he court disaster by the apparent recklessness and stern refusal to be dictated to by what may be termed established principles; but the Rugby football gospel according to Davies was ever that the side who scored most points won. Safety for safety's sake in football, as in all branches of sport and in all matters which go to make up the scheme of life, is a negative quality. It is the creative, the speculative footballer who does the big things. The speed which was his Davies made the most of, not after the manner of a mere sprinter, but unexpectedly: in such a way that it was immensely difficult to stay his progress. He often found it possible to squeeze through the smallest opening; in short, he was a complete footballer; and, perhaps more than any player of his day, he was after a pattern which he himself created.

He had a long, a great innings, and he gave to Rugby's history many new and brilliant and thrilling pages. His heart was, and is still, in the game; he was, and is, one of its keenest students, and now he has given us in book-form his ideas of the glorious

game which he played so well. And I am sure that by this book, just as by the part he filled in international and Services' Rugby, his name will endure for all the time we shall play the game.







**This label must not be removed from this book,  
nor the figures thereon altered.**

L.34.

		700

### **CONDITIONS OF ISSUE AS AN EXTRA VOLUME.**

May only be borrowed under subscriptions of three months or over.

It **MUST** be returned to the branch from whence it was issued.

It may **NOT** be lent to any person outside subscriber's household.

It may not be transferred to subscription without sanction of the issuing librarian.

### **LOAN CHARGES.**

Including Sundays, Holidays, or part of day it is kept.

As a CLASS "A" Vol. ... 1½d. per day.

As a CLASS "B" Vol. 3d. per week, or 2d. for 3 days or part thereof.



